

chef's knife review—
8 great picks

fine Cooking

FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE TO COOK

thanksgiving— how to make it easy

foolproof
gravy

roasting
a juicy
turkey

do-ahead
desserts

a hearty
salad for
dinner

perfecting
pot roast

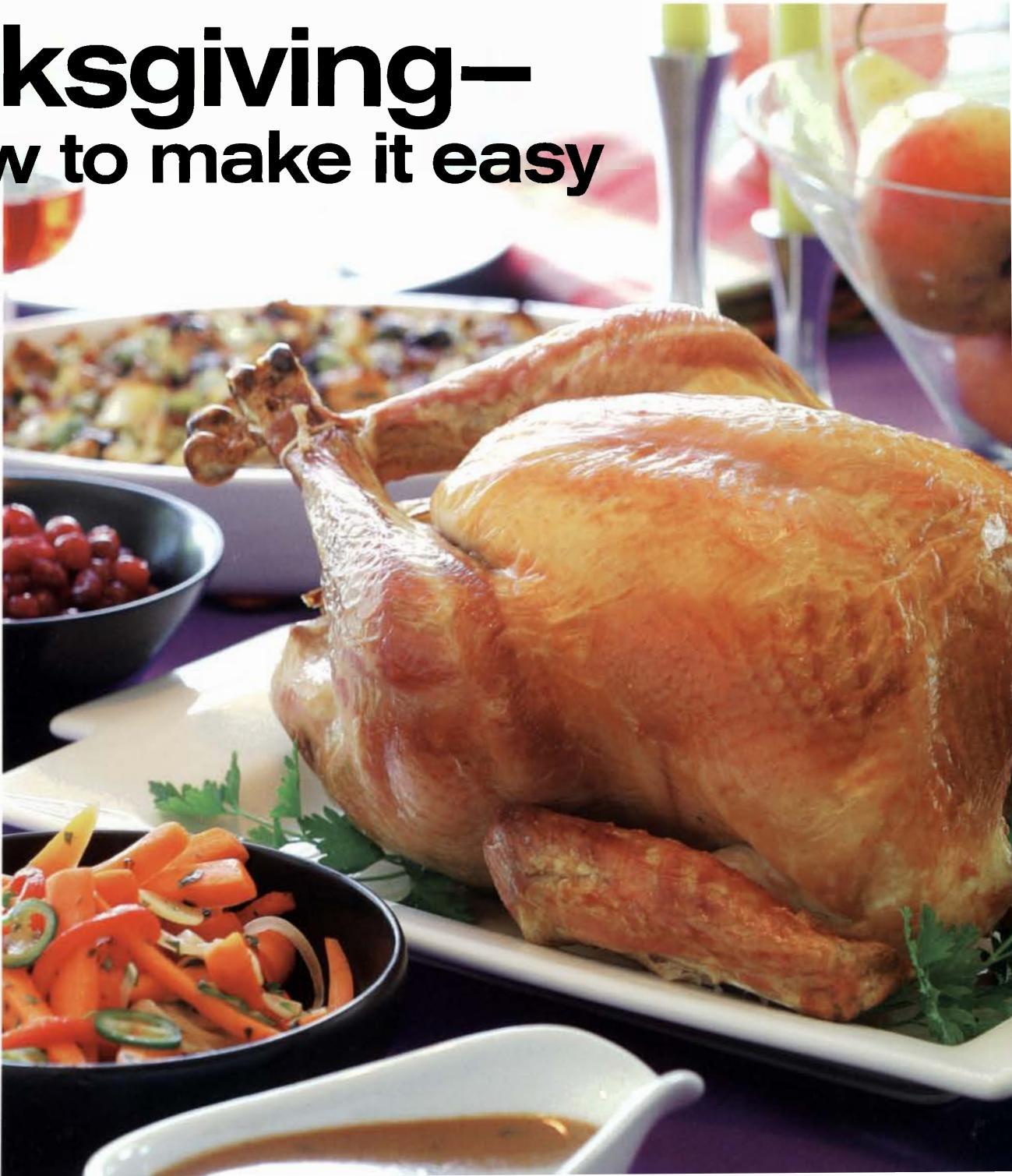
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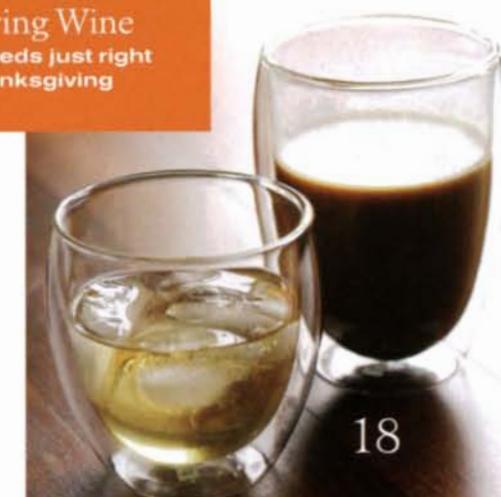


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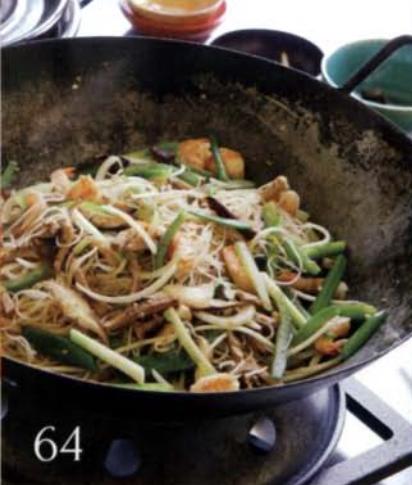
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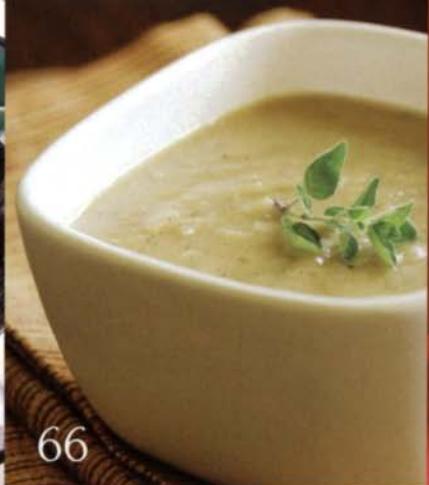
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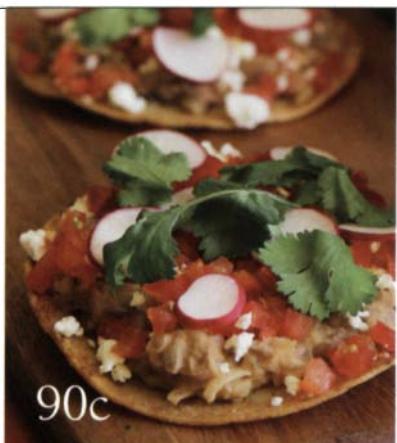
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Quick & Delicious

Easy comfort food



90c

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Great Ideas for the Holiday and Every Day

A make-ahead thanksgiving feast

Nibbles before dinner

Mrs. Lenkh's Cheese Sablés, p. 10

Starter

Wild Mushroom Soup with Sherry & Thyme, p. 69

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Dessert

Bourbon Pumpkin Tart with Walnut Streusel, p. 52

To drink:

As guests arrive, serve a glass of fizz: Cava from Spain or Prosecco from Italy would be great with the cheese sablés. For dinner, one of the delicious Pinot Noirs, Beaujolais, or Cabernet Francs on p. 40 would be just right for the whole menu. Choose one, or serve a selection.



The meal that occupies most of our thoughts at this time of year is—you guessed it—Thanksgiving. This issue will help get you going, with Pam Anderson's turkey essentials (p. 42), Bill Telepan's comforting but very side dishes (p. 47), and Rebecca Rather's rebellious pumpkin tart (p. 52).

The key to making the big feast easy is this: Do as much of the cooking ahead as possible. Start by reading through all your recipes and breaking them down into do-ahead components. For the menu we're suggesting here, we've gotten you started with the timeline at right. (You'll also find make-ahead tips in each article.) When your family and friends arrive, you'll be relaxed and able to enjoy the meal along with them.

And for the weeks before and after the busy Thanksgiving season, try one of the menu ideas at far right. For all the menus here, remember to check recipe yields, as you might need to double or halve them for your needs.

Thanksgiving timetable

The weekend before:

Prepare your grocery list; shop. If you want a fresh turkey, order it now. If you want a frozen turkey, buy it now and keep it in the fridge.

Make the cranberry sauce.

Make and chill the dough for the pumpkin tart.

Wash and freeze the kale.

Two days ahead:

If you've ordered a fresh turkey, pick it up.

Make the turkey broth.

Make and chill the dough for the cheese sablés.

One day ahead:

Make the pumpkin tart.

Make the mushroom soup.

The night before:

Dry-brine the turkey.

Prepare the dressing ingredients; refrigerate.

Cut the bread into cubes; set on a rack to dry.

Chop the vegetables for turkey roasting; refrigerate.

That morning:

Cook the kale and refrigerate.

Prepare the ingredients for the carrots.

Organize serving implements and beverages; set the table.

Measure the gravy ingredients.

Four hours before serving:

Remove the turkey from the refrigerator.

Roll, cut, and chill the cheese sablés.

Three hours before serving:

Put the turkey in to roast.

One hour before serving:

Assemble the dressing and bake.

When the turkey is ready, pull it out of the oven and let it rest.

Half an hour before serving:

Bake and serve the cheese sablés.

Make the gravy.

Cook the carrots.

Reheat the mushroom soup.

Reheat the kale.

Carve the turkey.

Soup & Salad

Butternut Squash Soup with Apple & Bacon, p. 67

Baby Romaine Salad with Spicy Chicken & Warm Chipotle Vinaigrette, p. 55

TO DRINK: A light, fruity red wine with good acidity, like Beaujolais.

Parsnip & Parmesan Soup, p. 68

Wilted Arugula Salad with Crisp Potatoes, Feta & Warm Black Olive Vinaigrette, p. 56

TO DRINK: A dry, refreshing white wine from Spain, like Albariño.

Saturday Night DVD Fest

Classic American Pot Roast, p. 58

Iceberg wedges with blue cheese dressing

Jumbo Cranberry Oatmeal Jumbles, p. 73, with vanilla ice cream (or sandwich the ice cream between the cookies)

TO DRINK: A medium-bodied, fruity Shiraz from Australia.

Sunday Supper with Friends

Butternut Squash Risotto with Bacon & Sage, p. 67

A salad of bitter greens

Festive Cranberry-Pear Tart in a Walnut Streusel Shortbread Crust, p. 71

TO DRINK: A rich, perfumey white wine like Viognier or Gewürztraminer.

Baseball Playoffs Grazing Party

Smoky Refried Bean Tostadas, p. 90c

Crisp Curried Chicken Fingers with Honey Mustard Dipping Sauce, p. 90c

Shredded Barbecued Pork, p. 65, in a lettuce wrap with cilantro, bean sprouts, and hoisin sauce

TO DRINK: A selection of your favorite beers and ales.

from the editor

Messing with tradition

Thanksgiving is one of those crazy holidays when nostalgia can wreak havoc with even the most sophisticated of palates. No matter that the stuffing was soggy, the turkey was dry, and the sweet potatoes were, well, too sweet—it was the way Mom made it, and damn it, that's the way it should be. Introducing new flavors to the hallowed holiday table can be tricky.

That's why we're kind of sneaky here at *Fine Cooking*. We realize that, holiday or not, we cooks want to have some fun if we're going to produce that much food for one meal. So we slip in the upgrades on the sly. No one will realize that the turkey is dry-brined, but everyone will ask for another slice of the deliciously moist breast meat. A little Cognac in the gravy is a subtle background note everyone will love; and a streusel topping on a zingy pumpkin tart will convert pumpkin pie nay-sayers into lovers. (For other Thanksgiving menu ideas, see p. 8.)

It's not just Thanksgiving favorites we're tweaking; in this issue you can finally learn to make a truly tender pot roast (from braising queen Molly Stevens, see, p. 58), and give it your own personal spin.

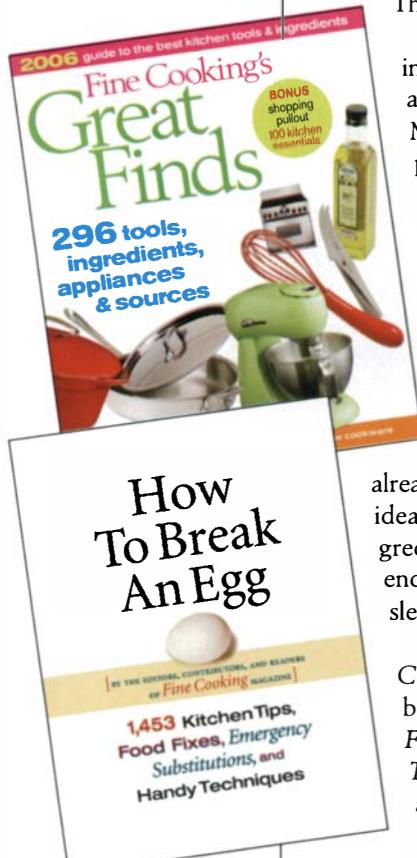
Sometimes we don't just mess with tradition—we invent a new one. I'm excited to announce *Fine Cooking's* first (and we hope, annual) shopping guide to great tools, appliances, and ingredients. *Fine Cooking's Great Finds* (at left) is available on newsstands and from www.finecooking.com right now.

Regular readers will be happy to know that this isn't just a collection of articles you've already seen in the magazine: It's full of great new ideas and more than 200 fabulous products, ingredients, and sources that will get your kitchen endorphins racing. (Think extra-virgin olive oils, sleek pots, an impressive new knife collection...)

And if that's not enough to keep you *Fine Cooking* fans full and satisfied, checkout our new book, *How to Break An Egg: 1,453 Kitchen Tips, Food Fixes, Emergency Substitutions, and Handy Techniques* (at left), arriving soon in bookstores and at www.finecooking.com as well.

—Susie Middleton, editor

P.S. One of my favorite traditions is keeping a batch of these light and flaky cheese sablés in my freezer. The recipe came to me from Martha Holmberg, *Fine Cooking's* former editor and publisher, who learned to make them in Paris.



How To Break An Egg



1,453 Kitchen Tips, Food Fixes, Emergency Substitutions, and Handy Techniques



Mrs. Lenkh's Cheese Sablés

Yields about 43 2-inch hexagons, plus scraps.

These are great with drinks and go especially well with dry and off-dry sparkling wines. The dough keeps for two days in the fridge, and for months in the freezer (thaw it in the fridge before using).

9 ounces (2 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon table salt
1/8 teaspoon cayenne
1/8 teaspoon baking powder
7 ounces (14 tablespoons) cold unsalted butter, cut into chunks
3 1/2 ounces (1 1/2 cups) finely grated sharp Cheddar
1 1/2 ounces (1/2 cup) finely grated Parmigiano Reggiano
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1/2 cup finely chopped pecans or walnuts (optional)
1 large egg yolk mixed with a pinch of paprika and 1/2 teaspoon water, as a glaze
Kosher or sea salt for sprinkling

Put the flour, salt, cayenne, and baking powder in a food processor. Pulse to combine. Add the butter and pulse again until the butter is in small pieces, six to eight 1-second pulses. Add the cheeses, pulse, and finally, add the egg and pulse until the mixture just starts to come together.

Dump the dough on an unfloured surface. If you're using nuts, sprinkle them on the pile of dough. Knead by lightly smearing the ingredients together as you push them away from you with the heel of your hand until the dough is cohesive. Shape the dough into a flat disk, wrap in plastic, and chill for an hour or two to let the butter firm.

Position racks in the top and bottom thirds of the oven. Heat the oven to 400°F. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to about 1/4 inch thick. Stamp out shapes or cut shapes with a knife. Arrange 1-inch apart on two ungreased baking sheets. Reroll scraps once and stamp again.

Brush with the glaze and sprinkle lightly with kosher or sea salt. Bake until golden brown and thoroughly cooked inside, about 14 minutes, rotating the sheets from front to back and top to bottom about halfway through. To test, break one in half and look to see if the center still looks doughy. If so, cook for a few more minutes, but be careful not to overbake. Let cool on a rack and store only when completely cool.

—Martha Holmberg

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from our readers

Dinner for today and tomorrow

First, let me say I thoroughly enjoy your magazine, and I promote it to others who have not heard of it all the time. I'm writing with a request. I'd love it if you could publish recipe ideas for leftovers. I know this sounds a bit mundane, but most of my cooking is done for just my wife and me, not for parties of six or eight. Thus, we often have leftover roast chicken, or whatever. This could be in the form of an occasional stand-alone article or sidebars on feature articles describing what might be done with leftovers.

Thanks for your attention, and thanks for publishing an outstanding magazine.

—*Jonathan Kohnoski, via email*

Editors' reply: Funny you should bring up leftovers. Just like you, we're always looking for good ideas on how to get more than one meal out of a great dish. It's just that sometimes we call the leftovers by a slightly more elegant name (see "Using Up the Turkey Deliciously," *Fine Cooking* #60; "Grilled Chicken for Today and Tomorrow," *Fine Cooking* #58; and "Make Marinara Sauce Now, Use it In Many Meals to Come," *Fine Cooking* #63). We're planning similar articles for the future, but for this issue, you're in luck. Once you make the delicious pot roast on pp. 58-63, you can turn to "From Our Test Kitchen," p. 79, for great ideas on what to do with the leftovers.

Caramel flavor from raw sugar

I was surprised not to see a mention of granulated evaporated cane juice in your article on natural raw sugars (*Fine*

Cooking #73, "Today's Raw Sugar...", p. 69). Since it has not been refined, it retains all the nutrients of the original cane plant, and has a wonderful caramel taste that imparts so much more flavor than the sugars mentioned in the article. Also, it can be used in place of both white and brown sugars. It can be found in most health-food stores and is also sold under the brand name Sucanat. While it is a more expensive alternative, it is, in my opinion, the preferable choice to the sugars mentioned in your article.

—*Tamiko Lagerwaard, via email*

Is induction noisy?

In response to "Induction: A New Way to Power Your Cooking" (*Fine Cooking* #73, p. 24): For ten years I used an induction cooktop and found it to be better than electric and gas. But the constant noise from the internal fan was a nuisance, especially if I was cooking a sauce or stew all day. The only reason I did not choose induction in my new home was because of the fan noise. Do the new induction cooktops have the internal fan? If so, what is the noise level?

—*Karen Sherrin, Scottsdale, Arizona*

Editors' reply: All induction cooktops have internal fans because they need to have an internal cooling system. While we can't speak for units from ten years ago, we can say that the unit we cooked on while researching our story wasn't especially noisy. After checking with a few manufacturers, who acknowledge that noise has indeed been a problem in the past, we've learned that the issue has been addressed in a number of ways, with fans that are quieter because they're smaller, more efficiently designed, and in some cases, made of plastic instead of metal. If you're considering buying an induction cooktop and are concerned about noise, find a dealer who can hook up a unit in the showroom for you to cook on. That way, you can take a test run and listen for yourself. ♦

Here's the place to share your thoughts on our recent articles or your food and cooking philosophies. Send your comments to Letters, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506, or by email to fc@taunton.com.

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Fine Cooking: (ISSN: 1072-5121) is published bimonthly, with a special seventh issue in the winter, by The Taunton Press, Inc., Newtown, CT 06470-5506. Telephone 203-426-8171. Periodicals postage paid at Newtown, CT 06470 and at additional mailing offices. GST paid registration #123210981.

Subscription Rates: U.S. and Canada, \$29.95 for one year, \$49.95 for two years, \$69.95 for three years (GST included, payable in U.S. funds). Outside the U.S./Canada: \$36 for one year, \$62 for two years, \$88 for three years (payable in U.S. funds). Single copy, \$6.95. Single copy outside the U.S., \$7.95.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Fine Cooking*, The Taunton Press, Inc., 63 South Main St., P.O. Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506.

Canada Post: Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to *Fine Cooking*, c/o Worldwide Mailers, Inc., 2744 Edna St., Windsor, ON N8Y 1V2, or email to mnfa@taunton.com.

Printed in the USA.

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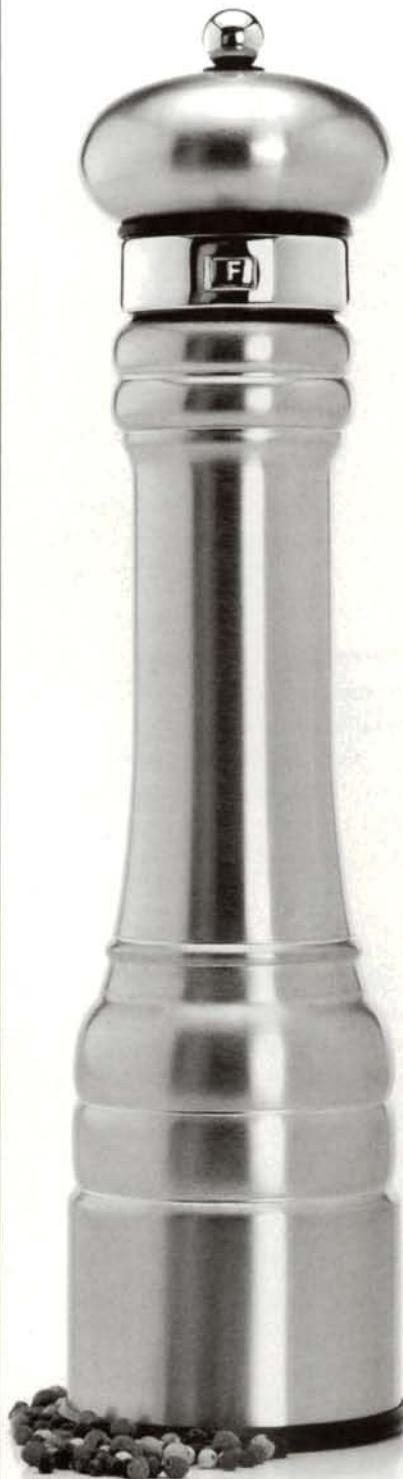
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Getting the most from our recipes

How to follow a recipe

- ❖ Before you start, read the recipe from start to finish so there are no surprises.
- ❖ Before actually starting to cook or bake, gather all the necessary ingredients and equipment. Prepare the ingredients according to the directions in the ingredient list (see below for more on this).
- ❖ For determining doneness, always rely first on the recipe's sensory descriptor, such as "cook until golden brown." Consider any times given in a recipe merely as a guide for when to start checking for doneness.

Watch those modifiers

A recipe ingredient list contains words such as "diced" and "chopped" that tell you how to prepare each ingredient for the recipe, but what you may not realize is that the placement of these "preparation modifiers" in the ingredient line is as important as the modifier itself. Take for example the following two similar lines that you may see in a recipe ingredient list:

1 cup rice, cooked

1 cup cooked rice

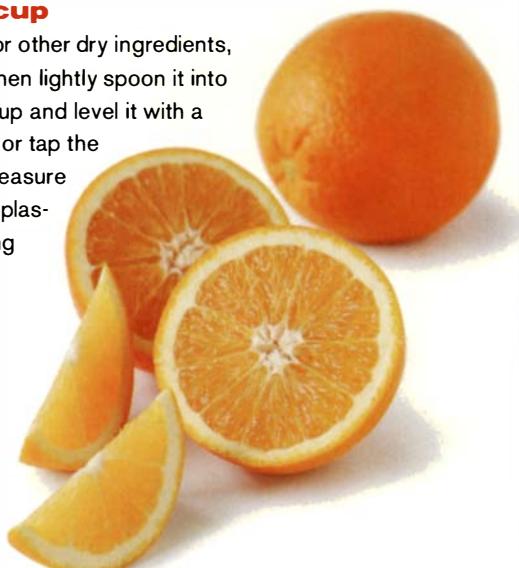
The first line is telling you to take 1 cup of rice and cook it; the second line is calling for 1 cup of rice that has already been cooked. The difference between the two is about 2 cups of cooked rice, and that can make a big difference in the outcome of a recipe.

Give your oven plenty of time to heat up

Don't rely on your oven's preheat signal; it often goes off prematurely. Instead, let your oven heat for at least 20 minutes before baking anything.

Use the right measuring cup

To measure flour or other dry ingredients, stir the flour and then lightly spoon it into a dry measuring cup and level it with a knife; don't shake or tap the cup. Be sure to measure liquids in glass or plastic liquid measuring cups.



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contributors



Nathan Fong



Rebecca Rather



Bill Telepan

Fine Cooking contributing editor **Pam Anderson** ("Give a New Spin to Thanksgiving Essentials," p. 42) has cooked so many Thanksgiving dinners that she's lost count. Lucky for us, that means she knows how to keep both the preparation simple and the flavors exciting. Pam's latest cookbook, *Perfect Recipes for Having People Over*, has just hit the bookstores. She teaches cooking classes across the country and is the food columnist for *USA Weekend* magazine.

In his cookbook, *Inspired by Ingredients*, chef **Bill Telepan** ("Fall Side Dishes," p. 47) wrote so affectionately of the deep, rich flavors of fall that we begged him to share a few of his favorite seasonal recipes with us. A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, Bill trained in some of the top restaurants in New York and France, and from 1998 through 2004, he was the executive chef at Manhattan's Judson Grill, where he earned critical acclaim and numerous stars for his eloquent ways with American classics. Recently, he opened his own restaurant, Telepan, on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

Rebecca Rather ("A Very Tempting Pumpkin Tart," p. 52) is many things: rebel, baker, cafe owner, but, above all, she is The Pastry Queen. And the pumpkin tart recipe she created for us is most definitely a treasure. When Rebecca isn't traveling the country teaching baking courses, she's busy running her Rather Sweet

Molly Stevens ("Making a Succulent Pot Roast," p. 58), a contributing editor to *Fine Cooking*, is a long-time fan of pot roast from back in the days when her mother made it, and from when she learned the merits of slow cooking as a student at La Varenne cooking school in Burgundy. She is the author of Williams-Sonoma's *New England*, and co-wrote *One Potato, Two Potato*. For her latest book, *All About Braising: The Art of Uncomplicated Cooking*, Molly nabbed both a James Beard award and an IACP cookbook award.



Bakery in the Texas Hill Country town of Fredericksburg. Her first cookbook, *The Pastry Queen*, was published last year.

A cold main-course salad is not what **Tony Rosenfeld** ("Warm Salads," p. 54) wants on his dinner table, especially once the nights turn chilly. That's why the salads he's developed for this issue are warm and satisfying, but still fresh-feeling, and even dressy enough for a casual meal with friends. Tony, a contributing editor to *Fine Cooking*, lives in Boston, where he also works as a food writer and restaurant consultant.

Born and raised in Vancouver, British Columbia, **Nathan Fong** ("Singapore Noodles," p. 64) gleaned a good bit of his cooking expertise from his Cantonese parents. He started off studying design, but a love of food prevailed, so Nathan headed for culinary school and embarked on a full-time career as a food writer

and television host, as well as a food stylist for film and for print advertising.

Jill Silverman Hough ("Puréed Fall Soups," p. 66) spent her first career as an advertising copywriter, and then decided to pursue her love of food. Jill lives in Napa, California, where she's a food writer, recipe developer, and a cooking instructor at Copia, the American Center for Wine, Food and the Arts.

Frequent *Fine Cooking* contributor **Nicole Rees** is crazy about cranberries. And in "The Sweeter Side of Cranberries," on p. 70, she shows us how to work their singular sweet-tart flavor into muffins, tarts, and cookies. Nicole is the co-author of *Understanding Baking* and *The Baker's Manual*. She lives and bakes in Portland, Oregon.

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1 A liquid fix for chocolate lovers

Forget dessert—instead, sip a cup of this super-rich drinking chocolate from Vosges. The delicious "La Parisienne" cocoa makes a boldly flavored traditional hot chocolate, but for those with a more adventurous palate, we also like Vosges's "Aztec Elixir" cocoa; it's infused with chiles that give the drink a slightly spicy finish. One-pound boxes of the cocoas are \$20 to \$22 at VosgesChocolate.com (888-301-9866).

2 A teapot that tips to brew

We appreciate this elegant Russian Court Teapot for its simple but intelligent approach to brewing tea: Spoon the tea leaves onto a perforated shelf, pour in hot water, and tilt the pot back on its stand so the water comes through the shelf to brew. Then tip the teapot back onto its base; this lifts the leaves from the hot liquid. *Russian Court Teapot*, about \$100. In the U.S., visit Culinaryteas.com (866-799-4005); in Canada, visit Victorianteas.com (888-550-8327).

3 Fancy grape juice for wine lovers

For a nonalcoholic drink that's special enough to serve during



the holidays, check out these exceptional grape juices from California's Navarro Vineyards. These aren't your everyday grape juices—they're made from Pinot Noir and Gewürztraminer wine grapes, so they're intensely floral, fruity, beautifully balanced, and mirror the true grape flavor that you taste in wine. *Gewürztraminer and Pinot Noir grape juices*, \$9.75 each at NavarroWine.com (800-537-9463).

4 For drinks at any temperature

These drinking glasses are made from borosilicate glass, which is used to make scientific lab glass, so it can stand up to extreme temperatures. The double-walled design allows the glasses to retain heat or cold, so go ahead and use them for both steaming-hot cappuccino and icy beer. *Double-wall glasses*, from \$11.95 for a set of two, at Bodumusa.com (800-232-6386).

Drink to these

Delicious beverages & vessels to put them in

BY REBECCA FREEDMAN



5 A new style of wine chiller

Made from neoprene and elastic, this wine chiller stretches to fit around anything from a wine bottle to a big soda bottle. We popped the chiller in the freezer for a few hours, slid it onto a bottle of Chardonnay, and it kept the wine cool for two hours, long enough for even the most leisurely meal. *Houdini neoprene wine chiller*, \$12.99 at KitchenKapers.com (800-455-5567).

How To Break An Egg

[BY THE EDITORS, CONTRIBUTORS, AND READERS
OF *Fine Cooking* MAGAZINE]

1,453 Kitchen Tips,
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How can pliers, rocks, and a mouse pad help you in the kitchen?

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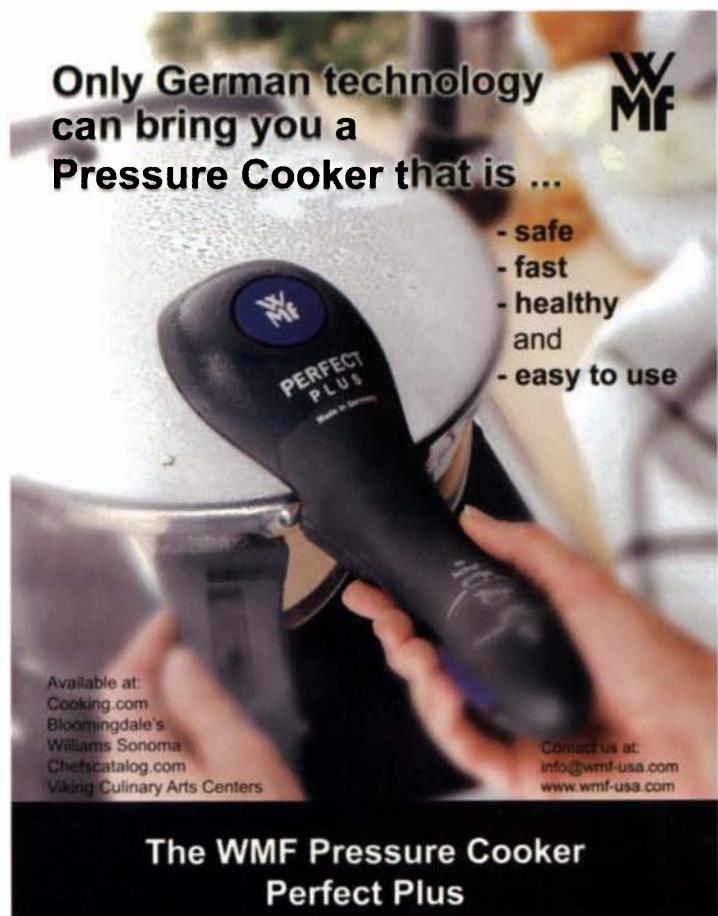
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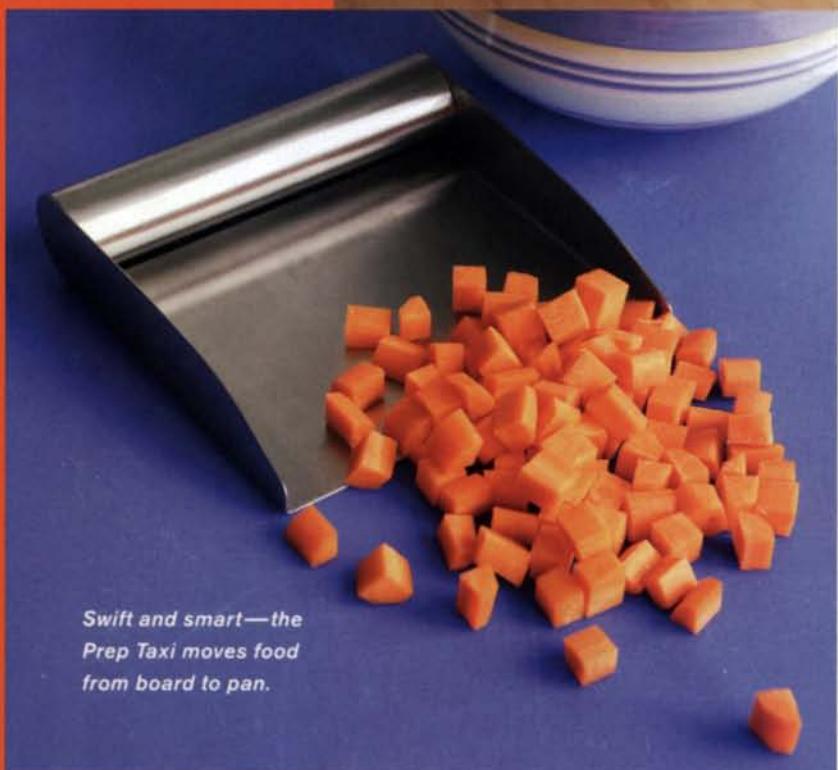
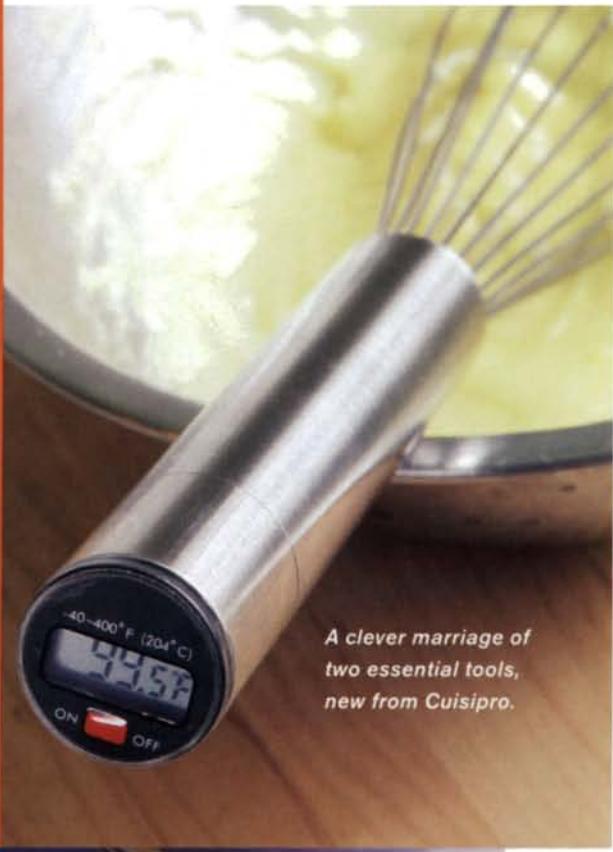
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equipment

Whisk/thermometer	20
Prep Taxi	20
Laser thermometers	21
Bundt pans	21
Chef's knives	22

what's new:

A whisk and a digital thermometer, all in one



An efficient tool for shuttling food

I'd been surviving just fine without the Prep Taxi, but now that I have it, I don't think I'd be willing to give it up. This handy tool—essentially a bench knife with sides—makes kitchen work flow just a little more efficiently. Now when I need to transfer a pile of diced onions or other chopped vegetables from cutting board to sauté pan, I can scoop them up with the 3-cup capacity Prep Taxi in one pass and drop them right into the pan. Even though this saves only a few seconds over my old methods of either the multiple hand-scoop approach or the bowl transfer maneuver (sweep the onions into a bowl and then empty the bowl into the pan), I truly feel like I'm moving quicker than before. The Prep Taxi is \$9.95 at Chefsresource.com.

—J. A.

How useful is a "laser" thermometer?

Ever wonder what infrared laser thermometers are? I finally did a little research and discovered that these devices measure the amount of heat (or infrared energy) emitted by an object. The laser component is only for aiming, sending out a thin red beam of light so you know where you're pointing it. I also found that these thermometers only measure surface temperature, so they can't help you gauge the doneness of a roast or any other food where you need an internal temperature.

Bonjour, the main manufacturer of infrared thermometers for home use, says they're intended to measure refrigerator, oven, or pan surface temperatures. I was hoping to also use it to check the temperature of liquids like deep-frying oil or sugar syrup, but the measurements were too inconsistent. It did, however, work very well for tempering melted chocolate, and if you're fussy about getting your butter softened to a precise 65°F before baking, this thermometer can help. It's available at Surlatable.com for \$89.95.

—Sarah Jay, managing editor



Metal and silicone bundt pans face off

The swooping valleys and sharp angles of bundt pans make for pretty cakes, but unless meticulously greased and floured, they're sticky business. So when silicone versions arrived on the scene in all their flexible, colorful, nonstick glory, I wondered if it was time to retire my metal pan. Well, after baking three kinds of cake (Vanilla Sour-Cream Pound Cake from FC #71, Chocolate Stout Cake

from FC #61, and a boxed yellow cake mix) in five silicone pans (KitchenAid, Lékué, Roshco, Silicone Solutions, Silicone Zone) and in two metal pans (Kaiser, NordicWare), I can tell you that neither material is perfect, but for now I'm staying with my metal pan. Occasional sticking problems seem a trifle compared to the mixed results I had with silicone.

—Kimberly Y. Masibay, associate editor



metal

Metal conducts heat quickly and evenly to the cake batter, which is important for leavening. But on the downside, sometimes metal pans don't like to release cakes. In baking six separate cakes in the metal pans, I encountered no surprises. Every cake rose nicely and baked in the amount of time the recipe specified. The yellow cakes from the boxed mixes and the pound cakes came out uniformly golden brown on the surface, with moist and tender crumb. The chocolate cakes were dark, dense, rich, and shapely. Twice I had trouble with cake sticking despite careful greasing and flouring, but nothing disastrous.

Pros: Excellent heat conduction, sturdy.

Cons: Prone to occasional sticking.



silicone

Silicone is flexible and more or less nonstick (it's still wise to grease and flour), so for the most part, cakes release easily from the pan. But silicone is a heat insulator, which seemed to hinder leavening. In my tests, batter rose slower, and in the end, the cakes didn't rise as high. The result was a denser, more compact crumb. The rich, heavy pound and chocolate cake batters took longer to bake than the recipes specified, and with some pans, that meant the cakes were almost burned on the outside by the time the interiors were done. Also, the flexibility of silicone means the pans can be unstable, and heavier batter can make them bulge, leading to lopsided cakes.

Pros: Cakes release cleanly and look pretty; the pans are light, flexible, easy to clean.

Cons: Poor heat conduction seems to interfere with leavening; can cause over-browning and underbaking; can be unstable.

A chef's knife is your most valuable kitchen companion

Here's how to find one you can love for a lifetime

BY MARYELLEN DRISCOLL

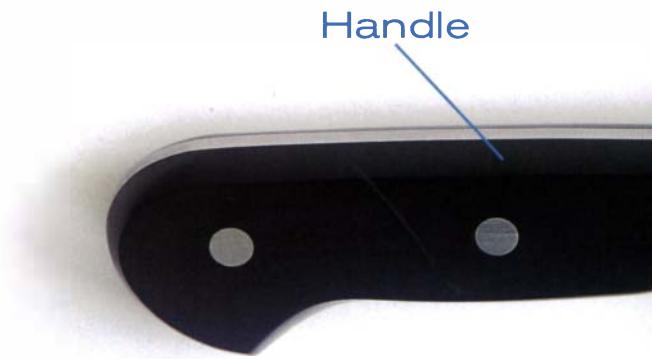
As one of our editors likes to say, a chef's knife "is like a dance partner." A knife that feels comfortable and graceful in your hand might feel klutzy to someone else. When you start shopping for that perfect chef's knife—one that will make slicing, dicing, chopping, and mincing more pleasurable, precise, and effortless—it's important to identify your personal preferences, and to realize that there isn't one knife that's right for everyone. Finding your ideal knife might take a little time, but you'll know it when you've found it.

Where to meet your match

The first step to finding a chef's knife that works for you is to search out a cutlery or cookware store (rather than mail-order source) with a wide selection of sample knives that you can hold or, even better, maneuver on a cutting surface. "You can't buy a knife off a peg board. You need to feel it and talk to someone who can guide you," says Jacob Maurer, a cutlery buyer for Sur La Table, which lets customers chop food with their knife samples. Seek out salespeople who can lead you to a knife that fits; don't fall prey to those who tell you which knife to buy.

Another shopping tip: Have an open mind. Richard Von Husen, owner of Warren Kitchen and Cutlery in Rhinebeck, New York, has customers "play" with a range of knives without looking at price to determine the size, shape, and weight of knife that they prefer. Then he helps narrow the choices down to those within the customer's budget.

Wherever you buy your knife, ask if you can return it if it feels dull or isn't the right fit after a short test drive at home (just don't ding it or wear down the blade). For ideas on what tasks will best help you to evaluate a knife, read about the tests we ran in our test kitchen (see p. 24).



How to evaluate a chef's knife

Once you've got a knife in your hand (see how to hold a chef's knife on p. 74), you should immediately get a sense of its fit. It should feel comfortable, like a natural extension of your hand. It should inspire confidence, not instill fear. If it feels wrong, move on. If it feels pretty good, start chopping (or mock chopping), noting how you respond to the knife's physical characteristics—see "Anatomy of a Chef's Knife" at right.

Weight: You'll need to try several knives to find your ideal knife weight. One school of thought believes a hefty chef's knife cuts through foods easier because it "falls" with more force. Another thinks a lighter chef's knife flows more freely and lets you maneuver the knife more skillfully. Bottom line: Choose the style that feels right to you. (See "What's a Japanese-Style Chef's Knife?" on p. 26.)

Balance: "Perfect balance" is in the palm of the beholder. Judge balance by gripping the knife by its handle. If it feels uncomfortably weighted toward the back of the handle or toward the blade, then it probably isn't for you. An unbalanced knife will make you work harder. Side-to-side balance is also important. When you come down on the blade, the knife shouldn't feel unstable, as if it wants to teeter toward one side or the other.

Size: An 8-inch chef's knife is the most popular among home cooks because of its versatility. A 10-incher's longer blade can cut more volume but may feel intimidating. A 6-inch chef's knife can offer an element of agility, like that of a paring knife, but falls short when working with volume or when slicing through something large, like a watermelon.

Anatomy of a Chef's Knife



The handle: A good handle is one that feels comfortable and secure to you. You shouldn't have to strain to hold onto it, and it shouldn't feel slippery when wet. There should be enough clearance on its underside that you don't bang your knuckles as you chop (the height of the blade affects this). Some knives' handles have molds or indentations to facilitate grip. These work for some people. For others they force an unnatural grip and make the knife hard to hold at awkward angles, such as when butterflying a chicken breast or carving a melon.

The bolster: Also called the collar, shoulder, or shank, the bolster is the thick portion of metal where the blade and handle meet. The bolster can add strength and stability to a knife as well as act as a finger guard for your gripping hand. Some forged knives have only partial bolsters, which don't extend all the way to the blade's heel, and some knives, especially Japanese-style knives, have no bolster at all. An advantage to partial- or no-bolster knives is that you can sharpen the full length of the blade, right through the heel. As you hold a knife, notice the slope from the bolster to the blade. It may be pronounced or gradual, but neither style should make you feel like you have to tighten your grip.

The heel: Unless it's a Japanese-style forged knife (see the box on p. 26), the heel is the broadest and thickest part of the edge with the greatest heft. It's meant for tasks that require force, such as chopping through poultry tendons or the hard rind of a winter squash. Watch out for knives that "thunk" at the heel when rocked. The heel shouldn't abruptly stop the rocking motion. Nor should it be so curved that the blade wants to kick backward.

The spine: This is the top portion of the blade, and it typically has squared edges. Note whether the edges feel polished or sharp and rough, which can potentially irritate your gripping hand. The spine should also taper at the tip; a thick tip will be hard to work with.

The edge: A good chef's knife should be sharp right out of the box. To evaluate sharpness, try slicing through a sheet of paper. A really sharp knife will make a clean, swift cut. (Of course, if you have the opportunity, chop some food, too.) Also note the line of the blade. A gentle curve from the tip to the heel can help the knife smoothly rock back and forth during chopping and mincing.

What is a forged knife?

For this review, we limited our testing to forged high-carbon stainless-steel chef's knives, which are commonly made by hammering a red-hot billet of steel into a shaped die. Forged knives have a reputation for durability and balance. There are, however, excellent stamped chef's knives laser cut from sheets of high-quality steel, as well as knives made from other materials, like ceramics. We'll cover these topics in future issues.

(Continued on p. 24)

Some of our favorite German-style chef's knives

(listed alphabetically)



1 Chef'sChoice Trizor Professional

\$84.95 at Cutleryandmore.com

For a substantial knife, its noticeable weight really worked in its favor. Markedly sharp and with just the right blade height, it has a comfortable, nubbly-textured handle that's easy to grip.

2 Friedr. Dick Premier Plus

\$74.95 at Chefknivestogo.com

More well known in commercial kitchens, Friedr. Dick makes a classic-style chef's knife that's well balanced and proportioned, sharp, and "doesn't take a whole lot of effort to move." The blade is nicely curved for a smooth, continuous rock.

3 Messermeister Meridian Elite

\$91.99 at Cutlery.com

Our test kitchen manager succinctly summed this knife up as "sharp, swift, balanced, and just the right weight." This knife has a partial bolster so that the edge can be easily sharpened along its full length. Its cousin, the Messermeister San Moritz Elite, with a seamless molded handle, was another well-liked knife.

4 Wüsthof-Trident Classic

\$94.95 at
Warrenkitchentools.com

As one editor noted, it's "tapered in the right places and beefy in the right places" with "subtle details that make the knife work naturally for you." Wüsthof's Grand Prix II knife was also a favorite of many. It has the same blade but with a contoured, slip-resistant polypropylene handle.

How we tested

While developing this article, our test kitchen and editorial staff put 25 forged high-carbon stainless-steel chef's knives to work, side by side. The results underscored just how subjective knife preferences can be. No two people picked the same five favorites, and a few knives prompted very opposing opinions. The knives shown on this page and on p. 26 represent those that at least four testers chose as one of their top picks. This grouping offers a nice range of high-quality chef's knives, and it's a good starting point for finding your own favorite. (Prices are for 8-inch knives.)

Some of the tasks we used to evaluate the chef's knives:

- Mincing parsley
- Dicing an onion
- Slicing winter squash
- Cutting carrots into thin strips
- Carving a melon

(Continued on p. 26)



"When you're committed to making great wines, it shows."

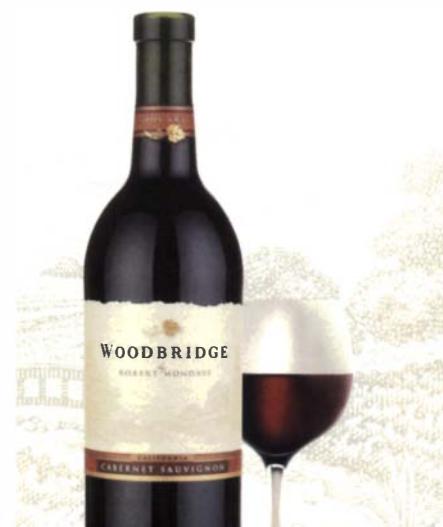
— Brad Alderson, general manager at Woodbridge Winery

www.woodbridgewines.com

When Robert Mondavi hired me at Woodbridge twenty-seven years ago, he insisted we use the best small winery traditions. Today, we still do (and no, we don't actually stomp the grapes). Our award-winning team doesn't take shortcuts. This attention to detail gives all our wines their consistently smooth, irresistible taste. Whatever needs doing, we jump right in. Feet first.


WOODBRIDGE
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ROBERT MONDAVI

TASTE OUR SMALL WINERY TRADITION.™



Some of our favorite Japanese-style chef's knives

(listed alphabetically)



1 Calphalon Katana

\$84.99 at [Bedbathandbeyond.com](#)

This knife had a soft, "incredibly comfortable" handle, despite a lack of bolster to nuzzle up against. It "encourages your hand to be in the right position, naturally," noted one of our test cooks. The thin blade sliced adeptly, but a lack of curve made it less smooth at mincing and chopping.

2 Chroma Type 301

\$79.95 at [Cutlerymall.com](#)

You're apt to either love or strongly dislike this light knife. Some found it comfortable and very easy to hold and control with the "pearl" on each side of the handle providing a guide for knowing where your grip is. Others found the pearl feature irritating.

3 Global

\$86 at [Surlatable.com](#)

This sleek knife has a thin, sharp blade that, to its many fans, felt amazingly skillful and precise. It's very light—almost a quarter pound less than the heavier German-style knives. But the blade's lack of curvature means it doesn't rock so smoothly, and the knife's lack of bolster, sharply angled heel, and thin handle felt precarious to even some of its strongest advocates.

4 Kershaw Shun Classic

\$118 at [Knifemerchant.com](#)

Many really liked how this knife felt: slender, sharp, fluid, nicely balanced, and truly comfortable. For a Japanese knife, it had a "feeling of substance" yet was still "light on its feet." Like other knives in this group, the lack of bolster may require some getting used to. This knife comes in left- and right-handed models.

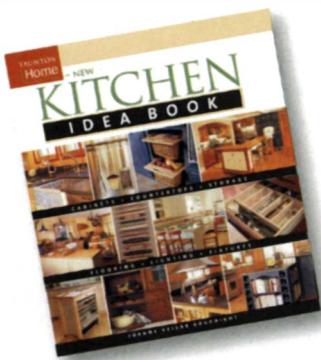
What is a Japanese-style chef's knife?

There's a growing trend toward "Japanese-style" knives, and even classic German knife makers are getting in on the act. A Japanese-style chef's knife tends to be lighter and have a thinner blade than a German-style knife, making it highly maneuverable and adept at fine slicing. With the thinner blade, it also tends to be quite sharp.

But a Japanese-style chef's knife isn't the best for splitting a chicken or slicing through an acorn squash because it doesn't have the beefy, wedge-like heel that's needed for those tasks. Also, its edge tends to have a straighter profile (less curve) than a German-style knife, so it doesn't always rock as smoothly.

—Maryellen Driscoll, editor at large

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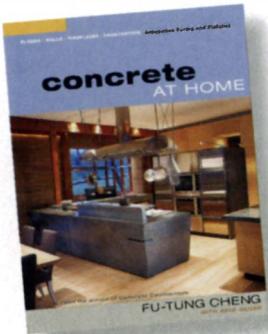
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Discover the nutty, sweet side of Brussels sprouts

BY RUTH LIVELY

While back, I came across a list of good things to give up for Lent, compiled by a children's Sunday school class. Along with drinking soda and punching siblings was something that surely resonated with everyone: eating Brussels sprouts. At that age I, too, would have gladly made the sacrifice, but not now. Nutty and sweet, these cute mini cabbages are among my favorite winter vegetables. I'm not shy about serving them to company—Brussels sprouts make a knockout side dish to almost any roasted, braised, or grilled meat—and

I'm pleasantly surprised by how often the sight of them elicits cries of, "Oh, I love Brussels sprouts!"

The keys to getting that kind of response are to start with fresh, firm sprouts and to cook them properly. Any method that involves searing or browning sprouts, such as roasting, sautéing, or braising, is a good bet, as browning enhances their nuttiness. Many recipes suggest blanching sprouts as a first step to ensure that the dense buds get tender, but be aware that this step can also waterlog the sprouts, diluting their flavor.

Brussels sprouts have a flavor that's both assertive and somewhat sweet, and therefore benefits from ingredients that add richness, acidity, or both. Classic flavor partners are bacon, ham, pancetta, or prosciutto; toasted walnuts, pecans, hazelnuts, cashews, or blanched or roasted chestnuts; and balsamic, sherry, and malt vinegars or lemon juice. Butter, cream, oils, and cheese give an enriching and rounding effect, as do meat juices and stock. Olive oil and nut oils, particularly walnut or hazelnut, are delicious lubricants for sprouts.

For a change, try a different cut

No matter how you plan to cut and cook Brussels sprouts, the first step is to use a small paring knife to trim off the lower part of the stem and any tatty outer leaves.

whole

I think sprouts are at their prettiest when left whole. To help them cook evenly when boiling or braising them, I cut a 1/4-inch-deep X into the stem end to help the liquid penetrate.

Braised with sherry vinegar

Braise whole Brussels sprouts in chicken broth until they're just tender. Add a good splash of sherry vinegar and some chopped dried cranberries or thinly sliced dried figs, and simmer until the liquid is reduced to a glaze.

halved

Halved Brussels sprouts (or quartered, if large) are great in gratins, sautés, or quick braises. Roast the halves, or sear them in a skillet to enhance their nutty sweetness, as in the recipe on p. 30.

Roasted with pancetta

Toss halved Brussels sprouts with cubes of pancetta, sea salt, pepper, and olive oil. Roast in a hot oven (400°F) until browned and tender, about 20 minutes.

sliced

For a confetti look, cut the sprouts in half lengthwise and then cut them into thin slices to create a pile of thick shavings (or, even easier, shred them in a food processor).

Sautéed with prosciutto and pecans

Sauté strips of prosciutto in olive oil until crisp. Add sliced Brussels sprouts, sauté briefly until tender, and toss with vinegar and toasted pecans.

separated into leaves

Just cut out the tiny core of each Brussels sprout with the tip of a paring knife and pull away the individual leaves. This can be tedious but makes a lovely presentation.

Wilted in butter and nutmeg

Cook the leaves in butter until they wilt and then season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Toss in chopped hazelnuts or walnuts.

(Continued on p. 30)

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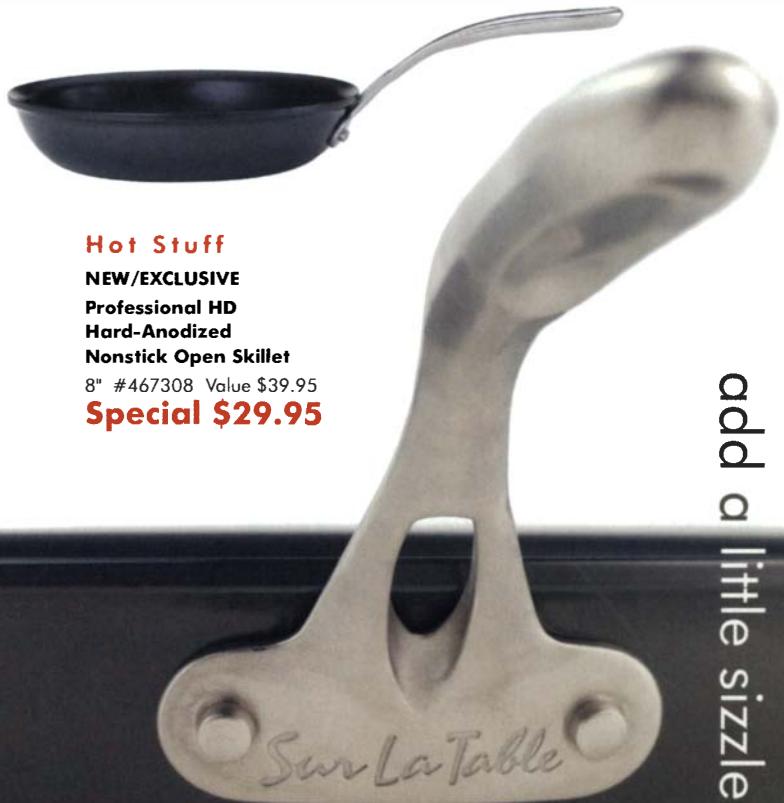
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Balsamic-Glazed Brussels Sprouts with Pancetta

Serves two to three.

This simple one-pan preparation is long on flavor, thanks to the pancetta and balsamic vinegar. If pancetta is hard to come by, substitute two thick slices of bacon.

2 ounces pancetta, cut into 1/4-inch dice (about 1/2 cup)

1 to 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

10 ounces Brussels sprouts (about 18 medium sprouts), trimmed and halved through the core

1/4 cup balsamic vinegar

Freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

Kosher salt

In a heavy 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan set over medium-low heat, slowly cook the pancetta in 1 tablespoon of the oil until golden and crisp all over, 10 to 15 minutes.

With a slotted spoon, transfer the pancetta to a plate lined with paper towels, leaving the fat behind. You should have about 2 tablespoons of fat in the pan; if not, add the remaining

1 tablespoon oil. Have ready 1/2 cup water. Put the pan over medium-high heat and arrange the sprouts cut side down in a single layer. Cook undisturbed until nicely browned, 2 to 3 minutes. When the sprouts are browned, add the water to the pan, cover immediately, and simmer until the sprouts are tender when poked with a fork or skewer, about 3 minutes. (If the water evaporates before the sprouts get tender, add more water, 1/4 cup at a time.) With a slotted spoon, transfer the sprouts to a plate.

Return the pan to medium-high heat and if any water remains, let it boil off. Add the balsamic vinegar and a few grinds of pepper. Boil the vinegar until it's reduced to about 2 tablespoons and looks lightly syrupy, about 2 minutes. Reduce the heat to low, add the butter, and stir until melted. Return the sprouts and pancetta to the pan and swirl and shake the pan to evenly coat the sprouts with the sauce. Season to taste with salt and more pepper and serve.

Ruth Lively cooks, writes, and gardens in New Haven, Connecticut. ♦

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When you only need a nip

I often encounter tempting recipes that call for very small amounts of liqueur or alcohol (such as Amaretto, dark rum, or Grand Marnier). To save money and shelf space, I buy mini bottles of the liquors at my local package store. These cute little bottles often cost less than \$2 each and hold just enough to make a recipe once or twice.

—Buffett Berger,

Agawam, Massachusetts

Winning tip

A shortcut to julienne carrots

I skip the initial step of finely slicing carrots to make julienne by using my vegetable peeler to create long ribbons; I press a little deeper into the carrot than usual to get thicker strips. I usually discard the first two to three slices and select large carrots with less taper for the task. To julienne, all I have to do is stack the thin, wide carrot ribbons and slice them into thin sticks. The julienne is a little thinner than typical but it works great.

—Dr. Charles A. Gutweniger, Camas, Washington

Flip potato pancakes with finesse

I often make rösti (grated potato pancakes), which have to be flipped out of the pan and then slid back in to cook the other side. I used to use a flat plate for the flipping, but it felt precarious since there was no way to comfortably grip the plate. But I've now acquired new pans with perfectly flat lids rather than convex ones, and they work great as rösti flippers. The lid's handle gives me a secure grip, and the flat surface means the rösti easily slides back into the pan.

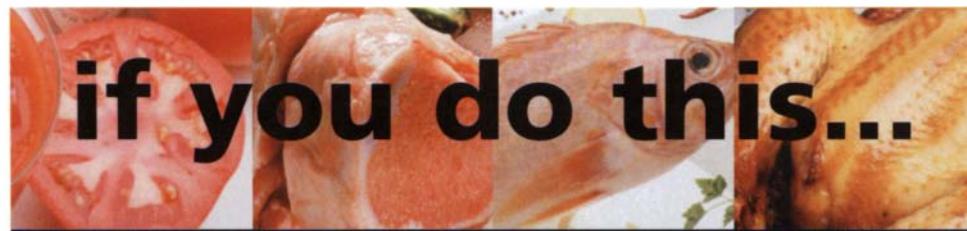
—Cheryl Prockton,
Somerville, Massachusetts

Crumble goat cheese without sticking

In a recent *Fine Cooking* Q&A, a reader wanted to know how to crumble goat cheese without it sticking to her fingers. I've solved this problem by cutting off the amount I need for a recipe and putting it in the freezer for 20 to 30 minutes (set a timer so you don't forget about it). When I take it out, it crumbles like feta.

—Barbara Minish, Ottawa, Ontario

(Continued on p. 34)



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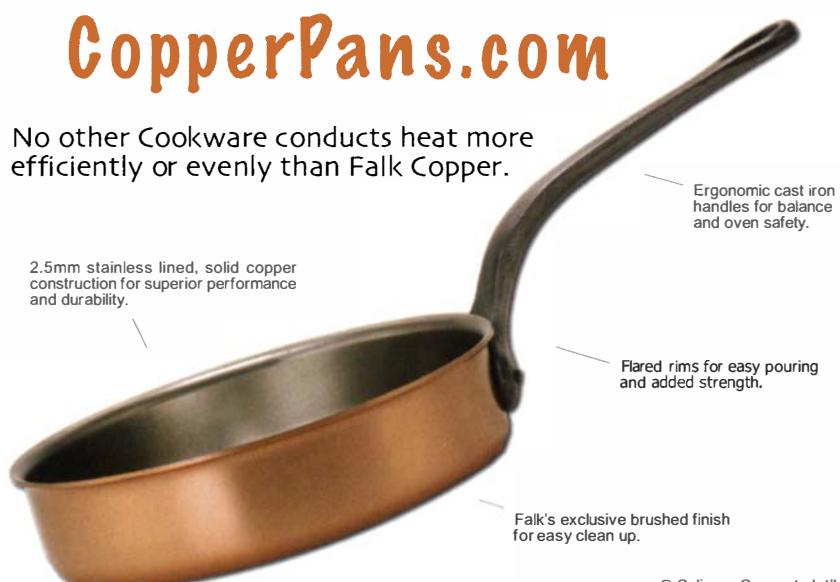
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Plastic ruler stands in for bench scraper

I don't have a bench scraper, but I've found that a plastic ruler—found in any supermarket—is a perfectly good substitute when it's time to clean up doughy, floury countertops. The ruler scrapes up the flour and sticky bits of dough on the work surface, and it quickly wipes clean with soap and water.

—Angela M. Lyons, Metuchen, New Jersey



Splash-guard your cheesecake

Whenever I make cheesecake (or anything else that requires baking in a water bath), I set the pan of batter into a large baking pan and only add the water after the pan is on the oven rack. Despite these precautions, I'd invariably wind up splashing water into the cheesecake mixture when pouring the water into the pan. Now I've learned to hold a small saucer or salad plate vertically, like a shield, at the cheesecake pan's edge as I'm pouring. Splashes are no longer a problem.

—Sharon Richardson, Corinth, Texas

Keep buns warm with heated rice

I have a neat trick for keeping fresh-from-the-oven muffins or rolls warm at the table for a long while. I put a couple of cups of uncooked rice in a fabric sack (you can use a clean cotton tube sock, a kitchen towel, or cheesecloth made into a little satchel, or sew a "beanbag" of rice together just for this purpose). Heat the satchel of rice in the microwave until it's warm to the touch, about 2 minutes. Then hide the satchel between two cloth napkins in a serving basket and put the rolls or muffins on top. The rice stays warm for about a half hour.

—Barbara Millington, Palatine Bridge, New York



Taste-test simmering broth without a spoonful of fat

When you're simmering chicken or other meat broth, it's sometimes hard to get a spoonful of broth and not the top layer of fat when tasting the broth for flavor intensity. So I insert a bulb baster deep into the pot and squirt its contents into a small bowl. Once cooled, I can taste and decide if it needs more simmering or if it's ready for seasoning.

—Geoffrey Selling, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Keeping foil flat on baking sheets

I've found lining a baking sheet with foil is easier said than done. Lay one end flat, and the other always lifts off. The sheet never sits perfectly flat and snug in the pan. I've discovered that if I lightly wet the underside of the foil, that little bit of moisture acts like glue between the foil and the pan.

—Retsu Takahashi, Brooklyn, New York

preventing browning

Keep cut-up apples from browning...

When I'm prepping a salad ahead of time that includes fresh apples, pears, or avocados, I toss the cut fruit with a little of the salad's dressing (which I also make ahead), using just enough to prevent the fruit from browning. It beats drizzling with lemon juice, which prevents browning but can lend a harsh flavor to the fruit. If the salad dressing is apt to stain the fruit, I use a little bit of nut oil with Champagne vinegar for the same effect.

—Ginger Fulton Bennett, Santa Cruz, California

...and sliced potatoes, too

As I'm slicing potatoes for a gratin, I keep the slices in a bowl with enough of the liquid I plan to use in the recipe to cover. The potatoes don't turn brown and the liquid, such as milk, cream, or broth, gets enriched with the potato starch, which only helps to thicken the sauce when the gratin bakes.

—Cherie Twohy, via email

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More than just a sour taste

How acidic ingredients can change the color and texture of fruits and vegetables

BY ANNE GARDINER & SUE WILSON

Squeeze a little fresh lemon juice on sautéed mushrooms or splash a bit of wine vinegar into bean soup, and you'll quickly taste how acids can brighten the flavor of food. But acidic ingredients do a lot more in cooking than enhance flavors. They have a major impact on the color and texture of fruits and vegetables.

Pinning down the precise ways that acids affect ingredients in recipes is a bit tricky, though, because acids can seem paradoxical. They contradict themselves time and again. Just when you think you understand how acids behave, they turn around and do the opposite.

For example, acids make cooked broccoli fade to a dull grayish green; and yet acids also prevent cooked red cabbage from turning blue. Acids help pickles stay crisp and delicious; but then again, vinaigrette seems to make lettuce go limp. So, do acids drain color or protect it? Keep food firm or turn it soft? Answer: all of the above.

Fortunately, acids aren't fickle; they follow a simple set of rules. Learn them (see the sidebars at right and on p. 38) and you'll be able to use acids to your advantage when cooking fruits and vegetables.

What's an acid?

Most often when we talk about acids, we mean the tart ingredients that you add to foods. Some of these acids are fairly obvious, but others might surprise you. Even lightly acidic ingredients—and the naturally occurring acids in fruits and vegetables, as well—can cause a color or textural change during cooking. Here are some common acidic ingredients:

- ❖ vinegar
- ❖ lemons and limes
- ❖ tomatoes
- ❖ wine
- ❖ molasses
- ❖ soy sauce
- ❖ yogurt
- ❖ buttermilk

How acids affect color

Fruits and vegetables get their colors from different natural chemical pigments. When a fruit or vegetable changes color during cooking, the pigments have undergone a chemical reaction—and more often than not, acids are involved. Here's what's going on:

Acids help red fruits and vegetables stay red.

Red cabbage, red grapes and plums, cherries, cranberries, strawberries, and raspberries contain pigments called anthocyanins, which are responsible for most of the red, purple, and blue colors in plants. Anthocyanins turn red in acidic environments and blue in alkaline environments. So when cooking a red fruit or vegetable, adding an acidic ingredient such as vinegar, lemon juice, or tomato juice helps prevent the food from turning purple or blue.

Acids turn green vegetables muddy.

Take broccoli, for instance. Steamed briefly, it turns a vibrant green; boiled for 15 minutes, it turns olive-drab. This also happens to other green vegetables, like spinach, kale, sweet peas, and green beans. The longer these vegetables cook, the more their cell walls break down. Natural acids escape the cells and react with the green pigment chlorophyll, turning it dull.

So how can you cook a green vegetable and keep its color

bright? Cook it to a minimum, using a quick-cooking method such as steaming, boiling, or stir-frying. Less cooking time means less opportunity for acids to escape the cells and react with chlorophyll. If you don't plan to eat steamed or boiled green vegetables as soon as they're cooked, plunge them into icy water to bring the cooking (and the escape of acids) to a halt. And if you want to season a cooked green vegetable with lemon juice or vinegar, do it right before serving or the color will fade.

That said, greenness isn't everything. With slow-cooking methods like braising or stewing, you sacrifice green vegetables' color, but you gain deeper flavor.

Orange and yellow vegetables don't mind acids.

Carrots, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and red peppers get their color from pigments known as carotenoids, which are relatively immune to acids.

(Continued on p. 38)

Boos Block profile

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How acids affect texture

Textural changes in fruits and vegetables—as when they become tender during cooking—have to do with cell walls breaking down. Acids can prevent texture changes or encourage them, depending on the situation.

In acidic surroundings, fruits and vegetables stay firm.

If you've ever tried to add raw onions or other vegetables to an already simmering tomato sauce, then you know that the vegetables

won't become tender. That's because the cellulose in vegetables and fruits doesn't dissolve in acidic conditions, even after hours of cooking. So cook fruits and vegetables to the desired texture before adding tomatoes, wine, or other acidic ingredients. And if it's a firmer texture you're after, as when poaching a pear, a strategic addition of acid to the cooking liquid should do the trick.

With dried legumes, the tactical use of acids can help you achieve a texture that's neither too firm nor too soft but just right. For example, when making baked beans (which use molasses, an acidic ingredient) or tomato-based bean soups, soak and cook the beans in water until they're soft. Then add your acidic sauce or soup ingredients, which will help firm the outside of the beans, so they won't become too mushy as

they cook further and absorb the flavors of the sauce or soup.

Acids (and oil) make lettuce go limp.

When a dressed salad wilts, both the oil and the acid in the dressing are to blame. The oil in a vinaigrette briefly protects the surface of lettuce leaves from the acid, which will make the leaves turn dark. But before long, the oil breaks through the waxy coating on the leaves' surface. When this happens, the leaves soak up the dressing, wilt, and darken. Cuts and tears on the lettuce also let vinaigrette seep into the leaves.

Of course, a green salad isn't a salad without a zippy vinaigrette; so if you want yours to be tasty and have a pleasing texture, dress it right before serving.

Anne Gardiner and Sue Wilson wrote The Inquisitive Cook. ♦

Acids help jams and jellies set

Setting jams and jellies successfully depends on a balance between acid, pectin, and sugar. Acid encourages the natural pectin in fruit to gel. Fruits like sweet apples, peaches, pears, apricots, and sweet cherries don't release enough natural pectin during simmering, so jams using these low-acid fruits usually include lemon juice or highly acidic fruit (sour cherries, tart apples, rhubarb) to increase the gelling power.

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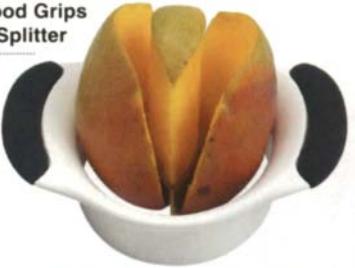
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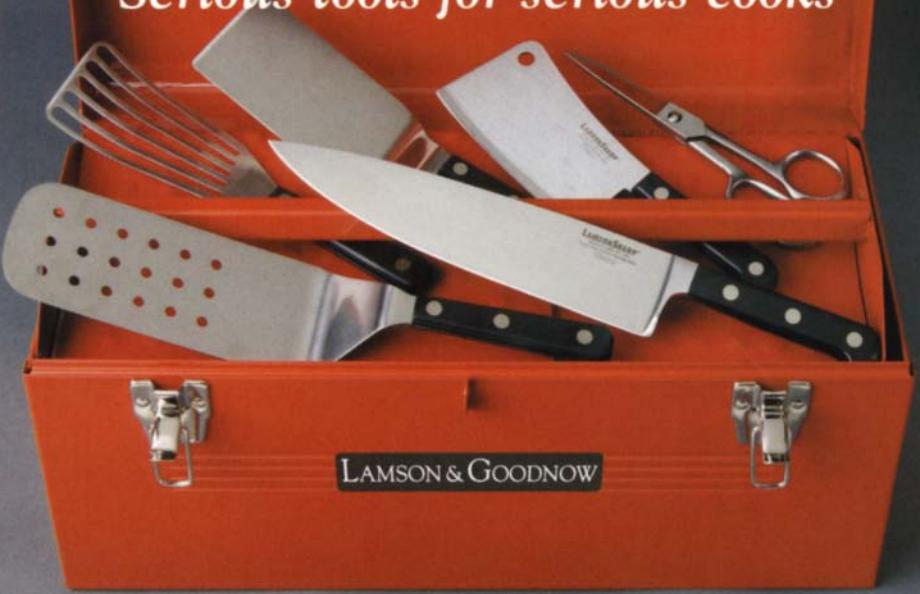
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Gamay



When you mention the Gamay grape, it's usually in conjunction with Beaujolais, the light, fruity red from France. (Some Gamay is grown elsewhere, too, like California.) Gamay is the sole grape that's used in Beaujolais wines, which hail from southern

Burgundy in France, also home to great Pinot Noir (see the box at right). Classic Beaujolais flavors include ebullient, sweet-tart red fruits (delicious with everything on the Thanksgiving plate), along with light spice and green herb flavors.

recommendations

- 2003 Beringer Gamay, California, \$8
- 2003 Louis Jadot Beaujolais Villages, \$11
- 2003 Domaine Dominique Piron Beaujolais Villages, \$12
- 2003 Chateau de la Chaize Brouilly, Cru Beaujolais, \$16

BY TIM GAISER

A traditional Thanksgiving meal—turkey, cranberries, gravy, and some choice pot-luck contributions from guests—is usually a vast array of sweet, salty, tart, and rich flavors. It's asking a lot of a

red wine to pair well with all those contrasting elements, and some bottles definitely do better than others.

Luckily, there are plenty of good contenders on the market that can meet this pairing challenge. Red wines with youthful fruit, bright

Pinot Noir



Some consider Pinot Noirs from Burgundy to be among the greatest wines made (unfortunately, the prices are often grand, too). But affordable examples can be found outside of France. The grape's supple cherry-berry fruit and complex spicy, herbal, and earthy

nuances are downright seductive. And no other red wine is as food-friendly, especially when it comes to pairing with all the flavors of the turkey dinner: Pinot's medium body, soft tannins, and graceful texture create an immediate harmony with all the varied elements.

recommendations

- 2004 Trapiche Pinot Noir, Mendoza, Argentina, \$7
- 2003 Nobilo "Icon" Pinot Noir, Marlborough, New Zealand, \$20
- 2003 "J" Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, California, \$25
- 2002 Domaine Tollot-Beaut Chorey-les-Beaune, Burgundy, \$28

Cabernet Franc

acidity, and soft tannins offer refreshing contrast to the rich likes of turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, and gravy. These qualities can usually be found in wines made from any of these three grapes: Gamay, Pinot Noir, and Cabernet Franc. Here's a mini

profile of each, along with recommendations for delicious bottles worth seeking out—for Thanksgiving or any time.

Tim Gaiser, a master sommelier, is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking. Retail prices are approximate. ♦



Cabernet Franc is one of the vital components in Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon blends from Bordeaux, Chile, and California. But it also does well bottled as a single varietal, as is done in France's Loire Valley. Delicious examples abound,

but specific labels can be hard to find, so ask a reliable retailer for good picks. The best bottles offer bright red-raspberry and cherry fruit flavors along with pronounced herbal notes—a particularly tasty complement to green vegetable dishes.

recommendations

- 2003 Pepperwood Grove Cabernet Franc, California, \$8
- 2003 Domaine de Beauséjour Chinon, France, \$15
- 2003 Château de Vaugaudry Chinon, France, \$16
- 2003 Lang & Reed Cabernet Franc, Napa Valley, \$22



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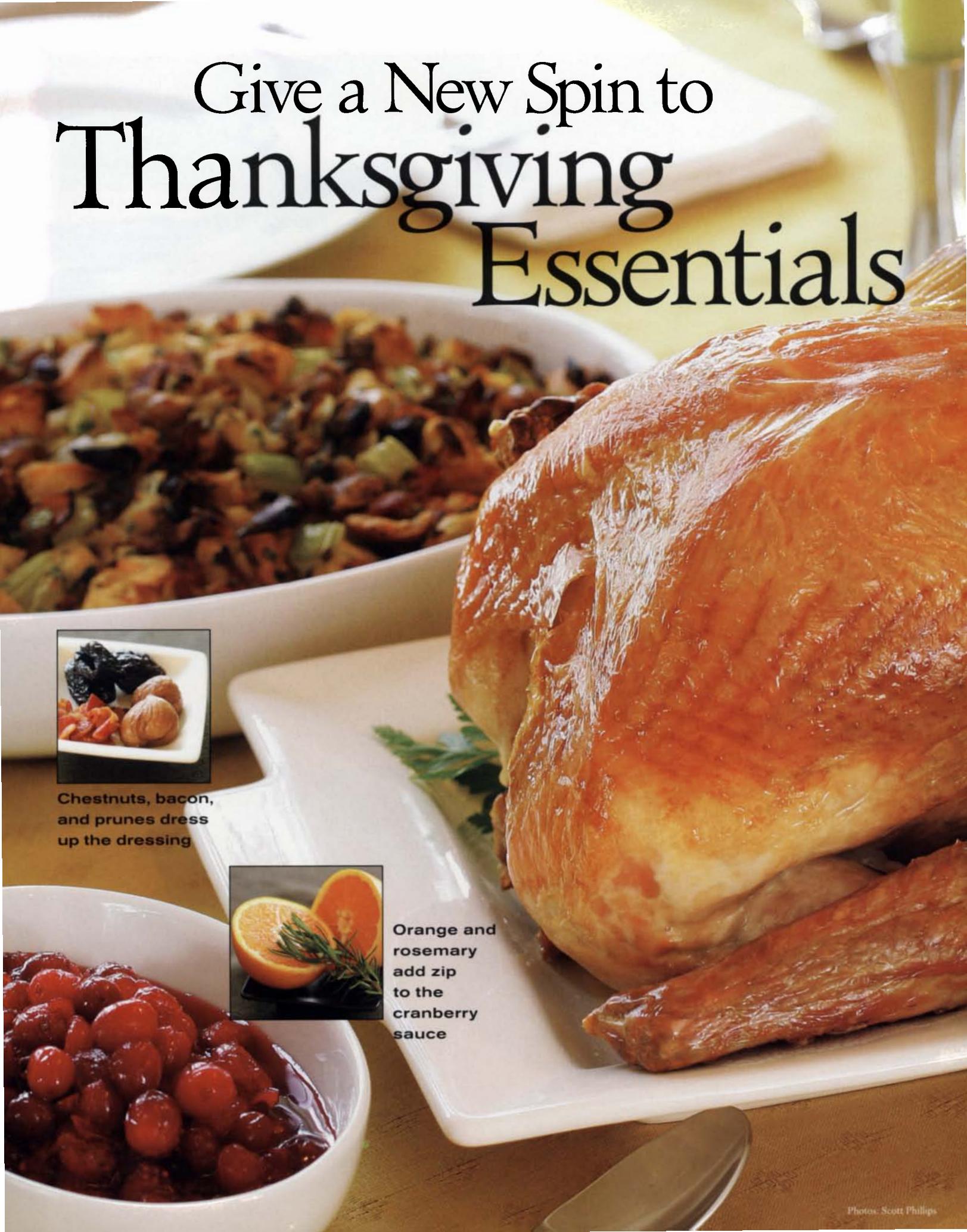
Give a New Spin to Thanksgiving Essentials



Chestnuts, bacon, and prunes dress up the dressing



Orange and rosemary add zip to the cranberry sauce





Cognac, thyme,
and cream perk
up the gravy

To keep the meal simple but interesting, use twists of flavor to update the classics

BY PAM ANDERSON

After twenty-six years as a cooking adult, I've hosted a variety of Thanksgivings—everything from lavish multi-course feasts to free-for-all buffets. One year we went to the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade and I got home just in time to roast little Cornish hens before nightfall. Then there was the year I served goose.

Presiding over all of those Thanksgivings, I've learned a few things. The first is that unlike any other dinner of the year, friends and family seem to need Thanksgiving to be familiar. If you stray too far off the traditional path, you'll more than likely hear about it. But it's also important to keep the meal interesting.

That's why I like to give little flavor twists to the classic elements of a Thanksgiving meal. Take cranberry sauce, for instance—one that's a perfect balance of sweet and tart, whole berries and sauce, and (most important for me) that won't run all over your plate. Flavor the sauce with familiar orange zest and juice, but add a surprising herbal note with minced fresh rosemary.

Give your guests the stuffing they want. I call mine a dressing because I like to bake it separately. (My reasoning: To get stuffing in a turkey cavity to a safe temperature, you risk overcooking the turkey, and I don't think

dry turkey is worth good stuffing. And frankly, a turkey cavity doesn't hold that much stuffing anyway.) Build the dressing with great bread, flavor it with lots of fresh herbs, bind it lightly with eggs, and bake it right—covered first to heat it through, and then uncovered so that it browns. The trick is to stud it with the unexpected—I like to add chestnuts, bacon, and prunes. For the gravy, a simple turkey broth provides a backbone of flavor; build on it by adding ingredients like Cognac, thyme, and a little cream.

I've also discovered little ways to keep Thanksgiving recipes simple without sacrificing flavor. My turkey recipe is a great example. While developing recipes for a roasted chicken story in *Fine Cooking* #70, I found that salting the bird overnight gave it a crisp, browned skin. I adapted the technique for turkey and got the well-seasoned flavor of a wet-brined turkey without the hassle—I call it a dry brine. Just sprinkle the turkey with salt and place it on a wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet—no big bucket or ice chest of salt water and no worries about the turkey becoming overly salty.

Finally, I've come to realize that the key to a truly relaxing Thanksgiving meal is to get much of the cooking done ahead. My first few Thanksgivings were so packed with last-minute tasks that there wasn't any counter space left to stack the dinner dishes. After a few experiences like that, I've figured out how to get most of the meal prepared ahead and many of the pots and pans washed and put away before I sit down. Follow the tips here (or the complete timeline on p. 9) and you too can prepare and enjoy your Thanksgiving feast.

Dry-Brined Roasted Turkey

Serves ten.

To dry-brine the turkey, I sprinkle it with salt and refrigerate it overnight. This gives all the flavor of wet-brining, but it's less cumbersome.

1 10- to 12-pound turkey

1/4 cup kosher salt

2 medium to large yellow onions, unpeeled and cut into eighths

2 medium carrots, unpeeled and cut into 1-inch chunks

2 medium ribs celery, cut into 1-inch chunks

The night before: Remove the giblets from the turkey, cut off the tail, if attached, and reserve them for making the turkey broth (at right). Rinse the turkey thoroughly. Sprinkle the salt all over it, starting on the back side, then the cavity, and finally the breast. Put the turkey on a wire rack set over a rimmed pan or platter and refrigerate uncovered overnight.

One hour before roasting: Remove the turkey from the refrigerator and let stand at room temperature. Fifteen to 20 minutes before roasting, position a rack in the lowest part of the oven and heat the oven to 400°F. Put half of the onions, carrots, and celery in the turkey cavity. Tie the legs together with kitchen twine. Tuck the wings behind the neck and under the turkey. Scatter the remaining onions, carrots, and celery in a large flameproof heavy-duty roasting pan fitted with a large V-rack (for sources, see p. 86). Set the turkey, breast side down, on the V-rack.

Roast for 30 minutes. Pour 1 cup of water into the roasting pan and roast for another 30 minutes. Remove the turkey from the oven and close the oven door. With two wads of paper towels, carefully turn the turkey over so that it's breast side up. Add another 1/2 cup water to the roasting pan. Return the turkey to the oven and continue to roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thigh registers 170°F, about another 45 minutes for a turkey in the 10-pound range, or about another 1 hour for a 12-pounder. (Keep a close eye on the vegetables

make-aheads

The night before:

Rinse the turkey, sprinkle with salt, and refrigerate. Chop the onions, celery, and carrots for turkey cavity and roasting pan.

Four hours ahead:

Take the turkey out of the fridge and let stand for 1 hour before roasting.

Three hours ahead:
Begin roasting.

and pan drippings throughout the cooking process. They should be kept dry enough to brown and produce the rich brown drippings to make gravy, but moist enough to keep from burning, so add water as needed throughout.) Transfer the turkey to a carving board or platter, tent with foil, and let rest for at least 45 minutes and up to 1 hour before carving and serving. Meanwhile, make the gravy (at far right) from the drippings.



Rich Turkey Broth

Yields 3 to 3 1/2 cups.

A cleaver makes short work of chopping the turkey neck into pieces.

2 teaspoons vegetable oil

Giblets (liver discarded), neck, and tail from the turkey (cut into 1-inch pieces)

1 medium yellow onion, coarsely chopped

Heat the oil in a 3-quart or larger saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the giblets, neck, tail pieces, and onion; sauté until the giblets lose their raw color and the onion softens and begins to brown, about 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to low, cover and cook for 20 minutes; the turkey parts will release a lot of liquid. Add 1 quart water, bring to a boil, partially cover the pan, reduce the heat to medium low or low, and simmer gently until the broth is flavorful, about another 30 minutes. Strain the broth into a fat separator or a 1-quart heatproof

measuring cup. Let sit until the fat rises to the surface and then pour off or skim the fat from the broth.

make-aheads

The turkey broth can be made ahead and refrigerated for up to three days or frozen for up to a month.



By the time author Pam Anderson takes the turkey out of the oven, the cooking is mostly done. The only thing left is to pull together the gravy.

Heavy cream is the secret to this rich, silky gravy



Deglaze: Pour in the Cognac, vermouth, and some of the turkey broth; stir with a wooden spatula to scrape the browned bits from the bottom of the pan.



Strain: Pour the contents of the roasting pan through a sieve set in a large saucepan. Press gently to extract all the juices.



Enrich: To add extra body, whisk in heavy cream combined with a little flour, and let the gravy simmer to thicken.

Silky Pan Gravy with Cream, Cognac & Thyme

Yields about 3 cups.

Drippings and vegetables from Dry-Brined Roasted Turkey (at far left)

2 tablespoons Cognac

1/2 cup dry vermouth

2 1/2 cups Rich Turkey Broth (at left)

2 teaspoons lightly chopped fresh thyme leaves

1/2 cup heavy cream

1/4 cup all-purpose flour

Set the roasting pan with the turkey drippings and vegetables over two burners set on medium high. Add the Cognac, vermouth, and 1/2 cup of the turkey broth; cook, stirring with a wooden spoon or wooden spatula to loosen the browned bits in the pan, until the liquid comes to a simmer. Strain the contents of the roasting pan through a large sieve and into a large saucepan. Add the remaining 2 cups turkey broth and the thyme to the saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat; reduce the heat and let simmer to blend the flavors, about 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, put the heavy cream in a small bowl and whisk the flour into the cream to make a smooth paste. Gradually whisk the cream mixture into the turkey broth mixture. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, reduce the heat to low, and gently simmer to thicken the gravy and cook off the raw flour flavor, about 10 minutes. Keep hot until ready to serve.

make-aheads

While the turkey is roasting: Whisk the flour into the heavy cream; store the mixture in the refrigerator. Measure out the Cognac, vermouth, and turkey broth. Pick and lightly chop the thyme leaves.

Herbed Bread Dressing with Bacon, Chestnuts & Prunes

Serves eight to ten.

- 1 1-pound loaf dense French baguette or artisan-style Italian bread, cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cubes (10 to 12 cups)
- 1 pound thick-sliced bacon, cut into medium dice
- 2 medium yellow onions, cut into medium dice (about 3 cups)
- 2 large ribs celery, cut into medium dice (1 cup)
- 7 to 8 ounces roasted whole jarred chestnuts, crumbled into small pieces
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup coarsely chopped pitted prunes
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage
- 1 tablespoon lightly chopped fresh thyme
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups homemade or low-salt chicken broth
- 2 large eggs

Put the bread cubes on a wire rack and let them dry completely overnight.

Adjust an oven rack to a lower-middle position and heat the oven to 375°F. Put the bread cubes in a large bowl. Lightly grease a 9x13-inch baking dish with a little oil or cooking spray.

In a 12-inch skillet over medium heat, cook the bacon until crisp, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer the bacon with a slotted spoon to a plate lined with paper towels. Add the onions and celery to the bacon fat in the skillet and cook until softened, 8 to 10 minutes.

Transfer the onions and celery to the bowl of bread cubes. Add the bacon, chestnuts, prunes, parsley, sage, thyme, and pepper.

Whisk the chicken broth and eggs together and add them to the dressing mixture; toss to combine. If there's liquid in the bottom of the bowl, let the dressing sit, tossing frequently, until the liquid is absorbed, 3 to 5 minutes.

Spread the mixture evenly in the baking dish, cover with foil, and bake until completely heated through, about 30 minutes. Remove the foil and continue to bake until the dressing is lightly golden brown and crisp on top, about another 20 minutes.

make-aheads

Up to five days

ahead: Prepare the dried bread cubes; store in a zip-top bag.

The night before:

You can prep the dressing ingredients, including sautéing the onions, celery, and bacon. (Before assembling, be sure to reheat the vegetables to liquefy the bacon fat.) Assemble the dressing no more than an hour before baking.



Cranberry Sauce with Orange & Rosemary

Yields about 2½ cups.

- 12 ounces fresh cranberries, picked through and rinsed
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh orange juice
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon finely grated orange zest

Bring the cranberries, sugar, orange juice, and rosemary to a boil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer for 1 minute. (Some berries will have popped and some will be whole.) Remove the saucepan from the heat and stir in the zest. Cover and let stand for 10 minutes. Let the sauce cool to room temperature and then cover and refrigerate. Return to room temperature before serving.

make-aheads

The sauce can be made up to a week ahead and refrigerated in a covered container.

Pam Anderson, a contributing editor to Fine Cooking, has written many cookbooks. Her latest is Perfect Recipes for Having People Over. ♦



4 Fall Side Dishes

Clever techniques, do-ahead options, and unexpected flavors make these recipes a chef's family's favorites

BY BILL TELEPAN

At this time of year, I find myself looking for inspiration in the comforts of meals past, which is how I came up with the four side dishes shown here. Each one is warm, comforting, and familiar—just the sort of thing I want to eat with my wife and daughter at the end of the day. But they also work well for Thanksgiving and fall entertaining because each dish can be made either partially or entirely in advance (you'll find make-ahead tips in the recipe headnotes) and they're all a bit out of the ordinary, which makes them feel special.

The Spicy Braised Carrots on p. 48, for example, get a kick from jalapeño and roasted red pepper. The Peppery Egg Noodle, Farmer's Cheese & Cauliflower Gratin on p. 49 is a hybrid of two noodle dishes that I ate while growing up. My potato gratin (p. 50) is made with olive oil instead of the usual butter and cream. And I put my own spin on classic Southern collard greens with the Black Kale with Ham, Garlic & Onions on p. 51. (Any kind of kale works well, by the way, but the texture and spiciness of black kale make it an excellent substitute for collard greens.) These have become my family's favorite fall side dishes, and I'm betting that if you choose a couple for your Thanksgiving spread, or even as a change from the usual weeknight fare, your family will embrace them, too.

spicy and roasty



Spicy Carrots with Jalapeño & Roasted Red Pepper

Serves eight.

Some jalapeños are very spicy; others aren't. If, at the end, the dish isn't spicy enough for you, use cayenne to bump up the heat. Get a head start by prepping the ingredients in advance and refrigerating them (covered) up to 4 hours ahead.

2 red bell peppers
1½ pounds medium carrots, peeled
5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup thinly sliced yellow onion
6 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
Kosher salt
1 fresh jalapeño, sliced crosswise into thin circles (I don't remove the seeds, but you can if you like)
1 tablespoon coarsely chopped fresh oregano
1 tablespoon coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
Cayenne (optional)

Char the bell peppers on an open flame or in a pan under the broiler until the skins are blackened on all sides. Put the peppers in a bowl and cover tightly with plastic to steam for about 15 minutes. Rub off the charred skin. Remove the stem and seeds and cut the flesh into long, thin strips.

Cut the carrots into six fairly evenly sized sticks by first cutting the carrots in half crosswise. Then quarter the thicker stem end lengthwise and cut the narrower root end in half lengthwise (see the photo below left).

Pour 3 tablespoons of the olive oil into a large skillet or sauté pan with a lid. Add the onion, garlic, and a pinch of salt. Stir to coat everything with oil and cook, covered, over medium-low heat until softened, 6 to 8 minutes. Add the jalapeño, cover, and cook for 1 minute. Add the red pepper strips and another small pinch of salt and cook, covered, for another 3 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and let cool.

Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil in the pan over medium heat; add the carrots and season with a pinch of salt. Stir to coat and cook, covered, for 7 minutes.

Add ½ cup water and cook, uncovered, over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until the carrots are tender and most of the water has evaporated, 7 to 9 minutes.

Add the red pepper mixture to the carrots. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes to warm through. Stir in the oregano, parsley, and lime juice. Season to taste with salt (and cayenne, if not spicy enough). Serve immediately.



technique

Slicing the carrots into six even pieces not only makes for a more visually pleasing dish, but it also helps the carrots cook at the same rate.



creamy and
comforting

Peppery Egg Noodle, Farmer's Cheese & Cauliflower Gratin

Serves eight.

To make this dish several hours in advance, prepare the recipe (but don't add the breadcrumb topping), cover, and refrigerate. When ready to bake, top with the breadcrumbs and pop into the oven.

**12 ounces (about 1½ cups) farmer's cheese
(see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 78)**

¾ cup heavy cream

**3 tablespoons unsalted butter; more for
the baking dish**

¼ cup homemade dry breadcrumbs

1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme leaves

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

**1 small head cauliflower (1¾ to 2 pounds),
trimmed and cut into 1-inch-long florets**

**1 cup homemade or low-salt chicken or
vegetable broth**

9 ounces fresh egg fettuccine

Heat the oven to 400°F. Set a large pot of salted water over high heat and bring to a boil. Butter a 9x13-inch baking dish.

In a food processor, combine the farmer's cheese and cream and process until well blended. (You can also mix them in a bowl; it will just take some elbow grease.)

Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter in a 12-inch skillet over high heat. Stir in the breadcrumbs, thyme, a pinch of salt, and a few grinds of black pepper. Sauté, stirring, until the breadcrumbs are light golden brown and

crisp, 1 to 2 minutes. Immediately scrape the breadcrumbs into a small bowl and set aside. Wipe the skillet clean.

Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter in the same 12-inch skillet over high heat, until the butter begins to bubble and brown. Add half of the cauliflower florets and cook until well browned, 2 to 3 minutes, stirring only once about halfway through. When well browned, transfer to a bowl. Lower the heat to medium high, add the remaining 1 tablespoon butter and repeat with the remaining cauliflower. When it's well browned, return the first batch of cauliflower to the pan, add the broth, and cook until the cauliflower begins to get tender but is still a little crunchy, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in 1 teaspoon pepper.

Cut the fettuccine into about 3-inch lengths and cook in the boiling water until tender, 2 to 3 minutes. Drain. Put the cauliflower with its cooking liquid and the farmer's cheese mixture in the empty pasta pot. Stir to combine. Return the fettuccine to the pot and stir it all together. Season to taste with about ½ teaspoon salt. Spread the mixture in the buttered baking dish. Sprinkle the breadcrumbs evenly over the top. Bake until the top is lightly golden brown and the cheese is bubbling, 20 to 30 minutes (depending on whether it's been chilled or not). Let cool briefly before serving.



technique

Cut the fettuccine into 3-inch lengths

before you cook it. If you tried to stir long strands of pasta into the thick mixture of cauliflower and cheese, the noodles would clump together instead of integrating with the other ingredients.

Potato, Thyme & Olive Oil Gratin

Serves six to eight.

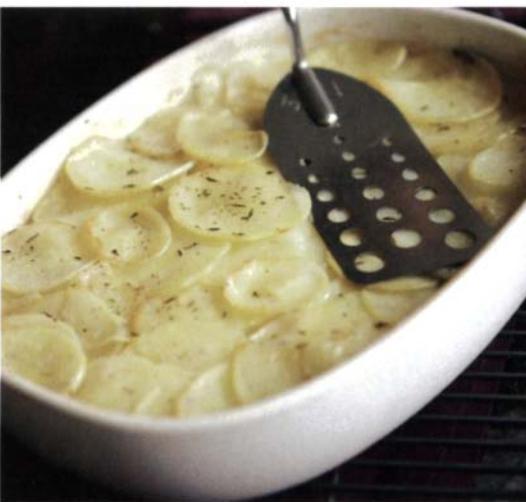
The recipe can be made completely up to 4 hours ahead; let the dish sit on the counter and, 20 minutes before serving time, reheat it in the oven until warmed through.

5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
3 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme leaves
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
½ cup homemade or low-salt chicken broth

Position a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F. Coat the inside of a 9x9-inch or equivalent baking dish with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Peel the potatoes, slice them into ¼-inch-thick rounds, and put them in a bowl. Add the thyme, 1 ½ teaspoons salt, and a few grinds of pepper and toss to coat everything evenly, making sure that you separate all the sticking potatoes. Pour the potatoes into the baking dish and arrange them in an even layer.

Bring the chicken broth to a simmer in a small saucepan. Whisk the remaining 4 tablespoons oil into the broth and pour the mixture over the potatoes. Press down on the potatoes with the back of a spatula to distribute the liquid. Cover the baking dish with foil and bake for 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and remove the foil. Press down on the potatoes with a spatula to get the juices to bubble up over the edges of the potatoes. Return the pan to the oven, uncovered now, and cook for another 15 minutes. Repeat this process of pressing on the potatoes every 15 minutes two more times for a total cooking time of 1 hour and 15 minutes. When done, the gratin will be lightly brown on top and the potatoes tender when pierced with the tip of a small knife. If the top of the gratin isn't browned after this amount of time, press on the potatoes again with the spatula and return the pan to the oven for up to another 10 minutes.

Remove the dish from the oven. Press one last time with the spatula and then let the dish rest on a cooling rack for 30 minutes before serving.



technique

Keep the potatoes moist and flavorful by pressing down on the gratin with a spatula several times during baking to redistribute the liquid.

Black Kale with Ham, Garlic & Onion

Serves eight.

You can use any variety of kale for this dish; I'm partial to the spicy flavor of black kale. This recipe can be made completely up to a day ahead: Just let it cool and then refrigerate; right before serving, reheat on the stove.

3 pounds kale, preferably black Tuscan cavolo nero, also known as lacinato kale (see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 74)

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

6 tablespoons unsalted butter

6 ounces smoked ham, cut into 1/4-inch dice (about 1 cup)

1 1/2 cups thinly sliced yellow onion (from about 1 medium onion)

6 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

1 1/2 cups homemade or low-salt chicken or vegetable broth

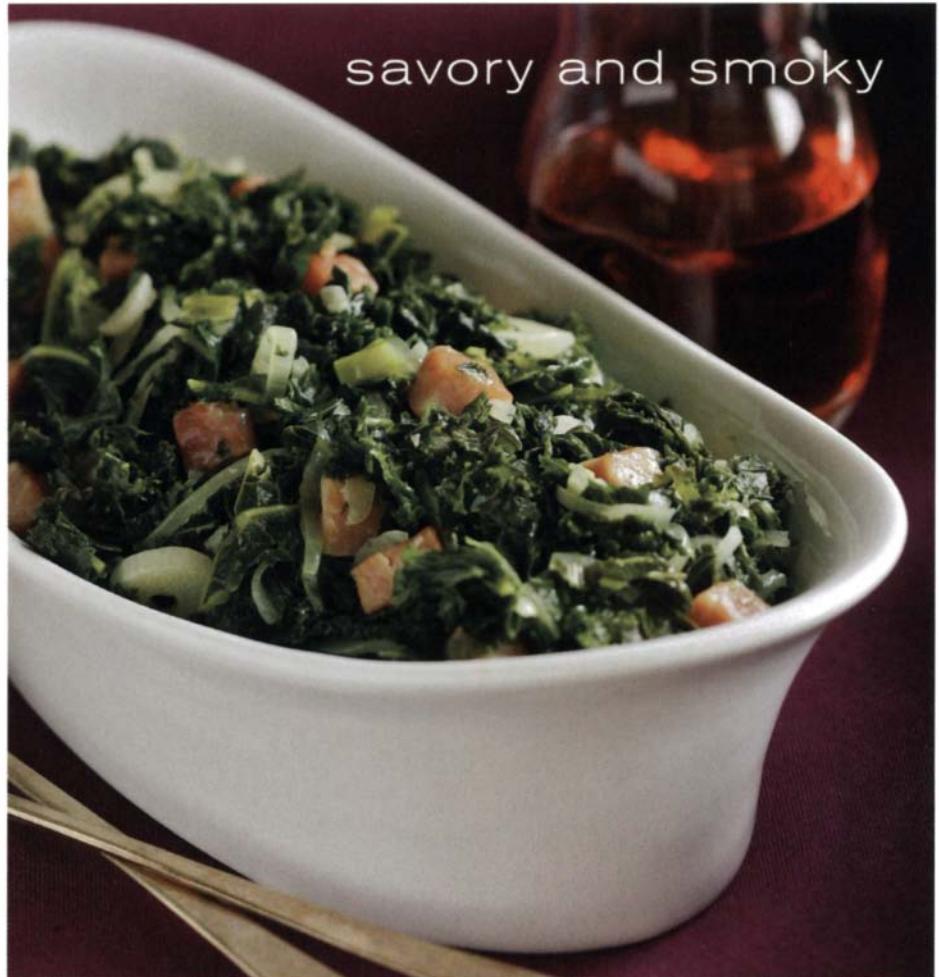
Red-wine vinegar (optional)

Remove the tough stems from the kale leaves by slicing a narrow "V" up into each leaf to remove the entire stem. Wash the leaves well in cold water and drain in a colander. Stuff into large (gallon-size or bigger) zip-top bags and put in the freezer for at least 2 hours or up to a month (see the box below right).

Fill an 8-quart pot with 2 inches of water and bring it to a boil over high heat, add a good pinch of salt, and add the frozen kale (yes, right out of the freezer). Cover with the lid slightly ajar and cook on high heat, turning occasionally, until tender, about 20 minutes. The kale should still have a little bite but shouldn't be stringy or tough. Drain in a colander and press with the back of a large spoon to squeeze out as much excess liquid as possible. When the kale is cool enough to touch, chop it into small pieces.

Melt 3 tablespoons of the butter in the 8-quart pot over medium-high heat. Add the ham and cook until it starts to brown a little, about 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium. Add the onion and garlic and a pinch of salt; cook covered, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 minutes. You don't want the onion or garlic to brown; if they start to, lower the heat. Add the broth, bring to a boil, reduce the heat to maintain a gentle simmer, and cook for 5 minutes. Return the kale to the pot, stir in the remaining 3 tablespoons butter, season generously with pepper (13 turns of a pepper mill should do), and cook gently until the flavors are well blended, about 7 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasonings as necessary.

Transfer to a serving bowl and serve immediately with a slotted spoon. Offer red-wine vinegar for sprinkling on individual portions, if you like.



technique

Freezing is the secret to tender kale.

Stuff washed kale in a heavy-duty zip-top bag and freeze it for a few hours or up to a month. Cook it straight out of the freezer. Freezing breaks down its fibers in a way that no amount of cooking can.

Bill Telepan is the chef-owner of Telepan in New York City. His most recent cookbook is *Inspired by Ingredients*. ♦

A Very Tempting Pumpkin Tart

Nutty streusel, bourbon-laced filling, buttery cookie crust—
who can resist?

I've always been a rebel, so I'm not one to get hung up on traditional holiday desserts. It's more my style to take an old favorite, give it a twist, and add an element of surprise. Take this make-ahead pumpkin tart, for example, which is a best-seller at my café. It began with an old recipe called Ronald Reagan Pumpkin Pie that I discovered in my files. (I have no idea where it got the name.)

For starters, I changed the pie into a tart. Tarts are as easy to make as pies (and maybe easier), but they're more elegant, I think, and much easier to cut evenly for serving. Then I added a touch of grated orange zest to the tart dough, which gives the crust an alluring perfume. Next, because I love contrasts, I started dreaming up ways to make my pumpkin tart creamy and crunchy at the same time. My dreams came true when I topped the filling with rich, crumbly walnut- and ginger-studded streusel. And, finally, I added a nip of bourbon to the filling—what self-respecting rebel wouldn't?



BY REBECCA RATHER

Bourbon Pumpkin Tart with Walnut Streusel

Yields one 10-inch tart; serves eight to ten.

FOR THE TART CRUST:

9 ounces (2 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
1/3 cup granulated sugar
1 teaspoon finely grated orange zest
1/2 teaspoon table salt
5 1/2 ounces (11 tablespoons) cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1/4 cup heavy cream; more if needed

FOR THE PUMPKIN FILLING:

1 15-ounce can pure solid-pack pumpkin
3 large eggs
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/4 cup packed dark brown sugar

2 tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/4 teaspoon table salt
1/2 cup heavy cream
1/4 cup bourbon

FOR THE STREUSEL TOPPING:

3 1/2 ounces (3/4 cup) unbleached all-purpose flour
1/3 cup granulated sugar
1/3 cup packed dark brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon table salt
1/4 pound (1/2 cup) cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
3/4 cup walnut halves, toasted and coarsely chopped
1/4 cup chopped crystallized ginger
Lightly sweetened whipped cream for garnish (optional)





Make it ahead.
This tart tastes
best if it's
baked a day
before you
serve it.

Make the tart crust: Using a mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, mix the flour, sugar, orange zest, and salt in a large bowl on low speed for about 30 seconds. Add the butter and combine on low speed until the mixture looks crumbly, with pieces of butter about the size of dried peas, about 3 minutes. Add the egg and cream, mixing on low speed until the dough is just combined. If the dough is too dry to come together, add more cream, a tablespoon at a time. Gently mold the dough into a 1-inch-thick disk and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour or for up to a week; the dough can also be frozen for up to a month.

Make the pumpkin filling: Spoon the pumpkin into a large bowl. Whisk in the eggs, one at a time, until thoroughly incorporated. Add both sugars and the flour, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, and salt. Whisk about 30 seconds. Whisk in the heavy cream and bourbon.

Make the streusel topping: Combine the flour, both sugars, cinnamon, and salt in a food processor fitted with a metal blade. Pulse briefly to mix. Add the butter and pulse until the butter has blended into the dry ingredients and the mixture is crumbly. Remove the blade and stir in the walnuts and crystallized ginger.

Assemble the tart: Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Take the tart dough from the refrigerator and let it warm up until pliable, 5 to 15 minutes. Unwrap the dough and set it on a lightly floured work surface. With as few passes of the rolling pin as possible, roll the disk into a 13-inch round, about $\frac{3}{16}$ inch thick. Drape the round into a 10-inch fluted tart pan with a removable bottom (for sources, see *Where to Buy It*, p. 86), gently fitting it into the contours of the pan. Fold the excess dough into the sides of the pan and press to create an edge that's flush with the top of the pan and about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick.

Pour the pumpkin mixture into the unbaked tart crust. Scatter the streusel topping evenly over the pumpkin mixture.

Bake until the topping is evenly cooked and no longer looks wet in the center, 50 to 65 minutes. Let the tart cool on a rack for at least 2 hours before serving (or wrap it in plastic and refrigerate overnight; before serving, let it sit at room temperature for 1 to 2 hours). Serve warm, at room temperature, or slightly chilled, with lightly sweetened whipped cream, if you like.

*Rebecca Rather is the owner of Rather Sweet Bakery in Fredericksburg, Texas, and the author of *The Pastry Queen*.* ♦

Warm Salads for Dinner

Grab a skillet and dress up crisp greens with bright, warming flavors

BY TONY ROSENFELD



While I love Caesar and Cobb salads, I won't make or order one as a main course for dinner. A salad may do for lunch, but in the evening, a meal centered around greens, especially cold ones, can feel more like a diet than a dinner. But I've found that salads can take on dinner proportions with a few warming additions, like sautéed pork or chicken, or even starchy vegetables like potatoes. A warm vinaigrette brings the sauté and the greens together, giving the finished dish the dressiness of a composed salad and the simplicity of a one-pot meal.

Prepare the toppings for these salads just as you would a stir-fry. Complete all of your peeling and chopping beforehand because things move quickly once you start cooking. Be sure to slice vegetables and meats uniformly so that they cook evenly. Set a heavy skillet over medium-high heat, let it get good and hot, and then sauté the meat and vegetables, stirring often, until they're just cooked through.

Whisk up the vinaigrette and then warm it in the pan. Much like a pan sauce, the

Key steps to vibrant warm salads



1 First, sauté the toppings. The cooking moves quickly, so be sure to prep all your ingredients in advance. **2** Use the same skillet to warm the vinaigrette, which will pick up flavors left in the bottom of the pan. **3** Wilt the greens with about half of the warm vinaigrette, tossing to coat the greens evenly. **4** Arrange the greens on plates and add the toppings; then drizzle the remaining dressing on the finished salads.

Baby Romaine Salad with Spicy Chicken & Warm Chipotle Vinaigrette

Serves four.

6 ounces baby romaine, washed and spun dry (about 8 loosely packed cups)
1/4 pound iceberg lettuce, thinly sliced, washed and spun dry (about 2 cups)
1/2 cup loosely packed fresh cilantro leaves
1 chipotle chile (from a can of chipotles in adobo sauce), chopped, plus 2 tablespoons adobo sauce
3 oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained and chopped
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 teaspoons light brown sugar
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1/2 cup plus 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

2 tablespoons fine cornmeal (preferably white)
1 tablespoon chili powder
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 1/4 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 3 small), cut crosswise into 1-inch-thick strips
1/2 small red onion, thinly sliced into half moons
1 ripe avocado, cut into 3/4-inch dice
1 1/2 cups cooked fresh or thawed frozen corn kernels (from about 2 ears)
1 lime, cut into quarters

Toss the romaine, iceberg, and half of the cilantro in a large bowl. In a blender or food processor, purée the chipotle chile and adobo sauce, sun-dried tomatoes, vinegar, brown sugar, and mustard. With the machine running,

slowly pour in 1/2 cup of the oil. Transfer to a measuring cup; season to taste with salt and pepper.

In a shallow dish, mix the flour, cornmeal, chili powder, and cumin with 1 1/2 teaspoons salt and 1/2 teaspoon black pepper. Season the chicken with 1 teaspoon salt and then dredge in the flour mixture.

Heat 2 tablespoons of the remaining oil in a heavy non-stick skillet over medium-high heat until it's shimmering, about 1 minute. Add half of the chicken strips, evenly spaced, and cook without touching for 2 minutes. Flip and cook until the strips are just cooked through and firm to the touch, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to a large plate lined with paper towels and sprinkle with salt. Reduce the heat to medium,

add the remaining 1 tablespoon oil, and cook the remaining strips in the same manner.

Discard the fat from the pan and wipe it clean with paper towels. Set the pan over low heat, add the vinaigrette, and cook, stirring with a wooden spoon or spatula, until warmed through, about 1 minute. Return the vinaigrette to a liquid measuring cup and whisk to recombine.

Gently toss the greens with about 1/4 cup of the vinaigrette or enough to lightly coat. Portion among four plates and top with the chicken, onion, avocado, corn, and the remaining 1/4 cup cilantro. Drizzle with some of the remaining vinaigrette (you may not need it all) and serve with lime wedges on the side for squeezing over the salads.



vinaigrette will pick up the flavors left behind on the bottom of the pan from the stir-fry. The heat of the skillet may break the emulsion of the vinaigrette, but that's fine.

Wilt the greens, but don't let them get soggy. With most salads, I generally like to toss the greens with the toppings before serving. But for these salads, I alter my traditional approach to adjust for their delicate make-up. In a large bowl, I dress the greens with about half of the vinaigrette to just wilt them. Then I set the greens on dinner plates and top with the sautéed vegetables and meats. A drizzle of the vinaigrette provides the crowning touch for these salads, which are pretty, but just as important, plenty filling, too.

Wilted Arugula Salad with Crisp Potatoes, Feta & Warm Black Olive Vinaigrette

Serves four as a light main course or six as a starter.

To make this salad more substantial, top it with a seared chicken breast. Or, serve it with a bowl of soup and crusty bread.

1/2 pound baby arugula, washed and spun dry (12 loosely packed cups)
3 tablespoons red-wine vinegar
1/3 cup pitted Kalamata olives (about 15), finely chopped
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 large russet potato (about 3/4 pound), peeled and cut in 1/2-inch dice
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
3/4 cup finely diced red onion (1 very small)
1/4 pound feta, crumbled (scant 1 cup)
1/2 pound small ripe cherry (or grape) tomatoes, halved (1 heaping cup)

Put the arugula in a large bowl. In a food processor, pulse the vinegar, olives, mustard, and 1 teaspoon of the thyme. Processing continu-

ously, slowly pour in 1/2 cup of the olive oil and 3 tablespoons water to make a loose dressing. Transfer to a liquid measuring cup.

Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a large (preferably 12-inch) nonstick skillet over medium-high heat for 30 seconds. Add the diced potatoes, sprinkle with 1 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until they begin to brown all over, 5 to 8 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium and cook until the pieces are just tender, another 4 to 5 minutes. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until it's soft and lightly browned, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in the remaining 1 teaspoon thyme. Transfer to a bowl or plate.

Reduce the heat to low and pour the olive vinaigrette into the pan. Cook, stirring with a wooden spoon or spatula until the vinaigrette is warmed through, about 1 minute. Return the vinaigrette to a liquid measuring cup and whisk to recombine.

Toss the arugula with about half of the vinaigrette or enough to lightly coat. Portion the arugula among four (or six) plates. Top with the potato and onion mixture and then the feta and tomatoes. Drizzle with some of the remaining vinaigrette (you may not need it all) and serve.

Spinach Salad with Stir-Fried Pork & Warm Ginger Vinaigrette

Serves four.

For a splash of heat, I like to drizzle this salad with some Sriracha hot sauce or Thai chile paste (for sources, see Where to Buy It, p. 86). You can set a bottle of this hot sauce on the table for guests to add as they like.

1/2 pound baby spinach, washed and spun dry (8 loosely packed cups)
3 tablespoons rice vinegar
2 1/2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
1 pound 1/4- to 1/2-inch-thick boneless pork chops, trimmed of excess fat and sliced crosswise 1/4 inch thick
Kosher salt
1 tablespoon dry sherry
1 teaspoon cornstarch
1/2 cup canola or peanut oil
2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
6 scallions, cut into 2-inch pieces
3 1/2 ounces fresh shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and thinly sliced (about 2 cups)
1/2 red bell pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger

Put the spinach in a large bowl. In a small bowl, whisk the rice vinegar with 1 1/2 tablespoons of the soy sauce, the sugar, and 3 tablespoons water. Put the pork in a medium bowl and season with 1/2 teaspoon salt. Toss with the remaining 1 tablespoon soy sauce, the sherry, and the cornstarch. Let sit for 10 minutes.

Heat 1 1/2 tablespoons of the canola oil in a heavy, 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add the pork and cook, stirring, until it loses its raw color and is just firm, about 2 minutes. Transfer the pork to a clean medium bowl.

To the skillet, add 1 1/2 tablespoons of the canola oil and the sesame oil, scallions, mushrooms, and bell pepper. Sprinkle with salt and cook, stirring, until the mushrooms and scallions soften and brown in places, about 3 minutes. Transfer the vegetables to the bowl with the pork and toss.

Still over medium-high heat, add 1 tablespoon of the canola oil and



the ginger to the skillet and cook, stirring until very fragrant, about 30 seconds. Remove the skillet from the heat, add the vinegar-soy mixture, and stir well with a wooden spoon or spatula, scraping the pan to incorporate the browned bits. Whisk in the remaining 1/4 cup canola oil; the mixture will remain largely separated. Transfer the vinaigrette to a measuring cup and whisk to emulsify thoroughly (the cornstarch from the browned bits will help).

Toss the spinach with half of the vinaigrette (or enough to lightly coat). Portion among four plates, top with the pork and vegetables, and drizzle with some of the remaining vinaigrette (you may not need it all). Serve immediately.

reader review

A *Fine Cooking* reader gave this recipe a real-world test. Here are the results:

"I've always thought of salad as being cold, so I wouldn't have thought to put warm stir-fried pork onto greens or to heat up a vinaigrette. But this recipe was tasty and very easy to prepare. The instructions were straightforward, many of the ingredients were already in my pantry, and the result provided a different take on ordinary spinach salad. I would definitely serve it again."

—Louise Johnson-Hartwell,
Bowie, Maryland

Making a Succulent Beef Pot Roast



Try a flavor combination here, or create your own, using the method on pp. 60-63.

Classic American

BROWN IN: Vegetable oil
MEATY ENRICHMENT: Bacon
AROMATICS: Celery, carrots
FLAVOR ACCENTS: Parsley, thyme, bay leaf, whole cloves, peppercorns
DEGLAZE WITH: Apple cider
BRAISE IN: Beef or chicken broth
VEGETABLES: Carrots, pearl onions, potatoes, turnips
FINISH WITH: Cider vinegar, chopped parsley

Red wine

BROWN IN: Olive oil
MEATY ENRICHMENT: Pancetta
AROMATICS: Onions, fennel, tomato paste
FLAVOR ACCENTS: Garlic, fresh rosemary, peppercorns, orange zest
DEGLAZE WITH: Brandy
BRAISE IN: Red wine and beef or chicken broth
VEGETABLES: Carrots, celery root, pearl onions
FINISH WITH: Chopped parsley, capers

Beer braised

BROWN IN: Vegetable oil
MEATY ENRICHMENT: Bacon
AROMATICS: Onions
FLAVOR ACCENTS: Garlic, fresh or dried sage, peppercorns
DEGLAZE WITH: Balsamic vinegar
BRAISE IN: Beer and beef or chicken broth
VEGETABLES: Carrots, parsnips, rutabagas
FINISH WITH: Dijon mustard or prepared horseradish

Mediterranean style

BROWN IN: Olive oil
MEATY ENRICHMENT: Pancetta
AROMATICS: Onions, celery, carrots
FLAVOR ACCENTS: Garlic, dried oregano, cinnamon stick, pinch red chile flakes, orange zest
DEGLAZE WITH: Red-wine vinegar
BRAISE IN: Canned tomatoes and beef or chicken stock
VEGETABLES: Potatoes, carrots, pearl onions
FINISH WITH: Chopped parsley



Follow these easy steps for the juiciest results, and customize with your own flavor choices

BY MOLLY STEVENS

If you were lucky, you grew up eating tender, succulent pot roast. At our house, it was one of those dishes my mother put together with no recipe, just a basic formula: She'd brown a large cut of beef, put it in a heavy pot with a few flavorings, pour in some liquid, and put it in the oven. Several hours later would appear a sumptuous meal of slow-cooked beef drenched in a flavorful sauce.

I understand why my mother needed no recipe. Once you grasp the method, there's endless room for variation. The formula at left and the step-by-step approach starting on p. 60 are the result of my own refinements, and they produce great results every time.

The pot is as important as the roast

A pot roast is a type of braise, and it requires gentle, steady heat. The best vessel is a heavy, cast-iron Dutch oven, preferably enameled; see *Where to Buy It*, p. 86) A good size is a 5- to 6-quart pot, which holds a 4-pound chuck roast snugly with just a bit of room.

The pot should have a heavy lid to trap both moisture and flavor from the meat juices, seasonings, and vegetables. A tight seal is critical, so I reinforce it by tucking a sheet of parchment into the pot before putting on the lid. This traps a bit more moisture and flavor.

Simple steps build complex flavor

To create a great pot roast, you'll layer on flavor at several points along the way. But the first step is to pick the right cut of beef.

Chuck makes the juiciest and most flavorful pot roast. Look for a top blade roast or a chuck

shoulder roast, often simply labeled chuck pot roast. These cuts are usually sold boneless, but if you buy a bone-in roast, get a heavier one to make up for the bone's weight.

Brown the meat and add bacon or pancetta for a meaty boost

Searing the beef creates a handsome, browned exterior on the roast and develops a wealth of caramelized drippings in the pot that add enormous depth to the dish. Shortcut this step and the finished dish will be less complex, less flavorful. Bacon or pancetta add a salty, savory edge and make the braising liquid a bit more robust.

Aromatic vegetables, herbs, and spices enhance the braising liquid. Carrot, celery, and onion are classic; fennel adds a different twist. When choosing flavor accents like herbs, spices, garlic, and citrus zest, consider what belongs together: Resist creating a hodgepodge by making too many disparate choices. Many excellent pot roasts are seasoned simply with sprigs of parsley and thyme and a bay leaf.

Add the braising liquid in two steps. I start with an assertively flavored liquid (vinegar, spirits, or cider) to deglaze the pan. When this cooks down, I make up most of the braising liquid with something mellower but equally flavorful (like broth, wine, or beer). I wait to add the vegetables until the pot roast is about two-thirds of the way cooked to keep them from getting mushy.

For a final hit of flavor, I give my pot roasts even more personality. I reduce the juices so they're flavorful but not thickened, and then add a crowning touch of something sharp, creamy, or fresh, such as mustard, capers, crème fraîche, chopped herbs, or lemon juice.

Pot roast formula

Serves six to eight.

- 1 4-pound boneless chuck roast
- 5 ounces bacon or pancetta
- 1½ cups chopped aromatics
- A few flavor accents
- Deglazing liquid
- 3 cups braising liquid
- 6 cups chopped vegetables
- 1 or 2 sauce enhancements

Tender pot roast, step-by-step

Serves six to eight.



1

Get ready to cook.

Read through all the steps carefully and gather your ingredients.

Set a rack on the lower third of the oven and heat the oven to 300°F. Select a 5- to 6-quart Dutch oven with a tight-fitting lid.

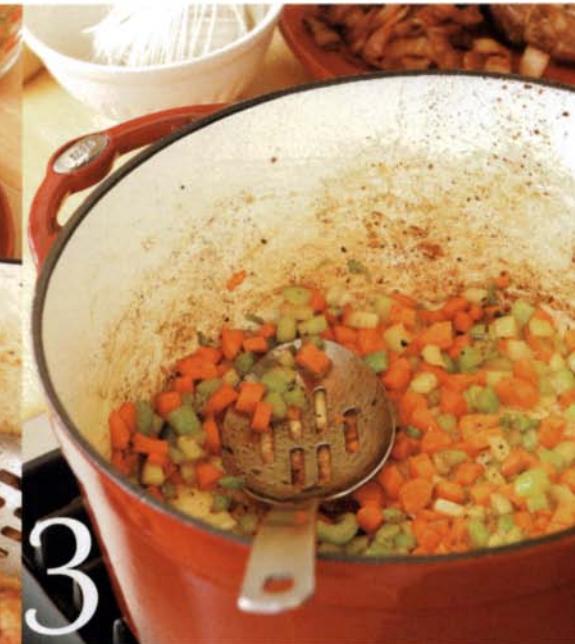


2

Brown the meat.

1 4-pound boneless beef chuck pot roast
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil or vegetable oil
5 ounces thick-sliced (1/4 inch) bacon or pancetta, cut into 1/2-inch squares (to yield 1 cup)

Tie the roast into a snug shape with twine, pat it dry with paper towels, and season with salt and pepper. In the Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Brown the meat thoroughly on all sides, turning with tongs, about 5 minutes per side. The meat should sizzle but not scorch; adjust the heat accordingly. Transfer the meat to a large plate. Lower the heat to medium, add the bacon or pancetta, and cook until just browned and beginning to crisp, 5 to 8 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat. With a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon or pancetta to the plate with the beef. Spoon 2 tablespoons of the fat from the pan into a small dish and discard the rest.



3

Cook the aromatics.

Choose up to four, peeled and finely chopped, to total 1 1/2 cups (excluding tomato paste):

Carrots
Celery, with leaves
Fennel bulb
Onion
Shallots
1/4 cup tomato paste

Evaluate the drippings on the bottom of the pot. They may be very dark, almost black, but if there are any scorched bits, wipe these out with a wadded paper towel (if in doubt, taste a fleck—as long as it doesn't taste acrid, it's fine). Return the pot to medium heat and add the 2 tablespoons reserved fat. Add the aromatics (but not the tomato paste), season with salt and pepper, and cook until starting to soften, about 5 minutes. If using tomato paste, add it now. Cook, stirring, until darkened slightly, 2 to 3 minutes.

A pot roast is a type of braise: a large cut of meat slowly cooks to tenderness in a flavorful liquid.



4

Add the flavor accents.

Choose up to five:

- 2 cloves garlic, smashed or coarsely chopped
- 2 sprigs fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 2 sprigs fresh marjoram (or $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried)
- 2 sprigs fresh oregano (or $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried)
- 2 sprigs fresh sage (or $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried)
- 1 or 2 bay leaves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- A few whole cloves
- Several whole peppercorns
- A pinch crushed red chile flakes
- 2 wide strips lemon or orange zest

Tie the flavor accents in a small cheesecloth sachet (see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 79). I like garlic, herbs, and then a few more. Add the sachet to the pot.



5

Deglaze the pot.

Choose one:

- 1 1/2 cups fresh apple cider
- 1/4 cup vinegar (cider, balsamic, red-wine, or white-wine)
- 1/4 cup spirits (grappa, rum, brandy, or whiskey)

Add the deglazing liquid, stirring with a wooden spoon to scrape up any remaining drippings on the bottom of the pot if necessary. Bring to a boil over high heat, and cook until the liquid has reduced to about 2 tablespoons.



6

Add the braising liquid.

The braising liquid should total 3 cups. Choose one:

- 3 cups homemade or low-salt chicken or beef broth
- 1 1/2 cups beer or ale plus 1 1/2 cups chicken or beef broth
- 1 14 1/2-ounce can peeled tomatoes, chopped, with their juices, plus enough chicken or beef broth to total 3 cups
- 1 1/2 cups dry red or dry white wine plus 1 1/2 cups chicken or beef broth

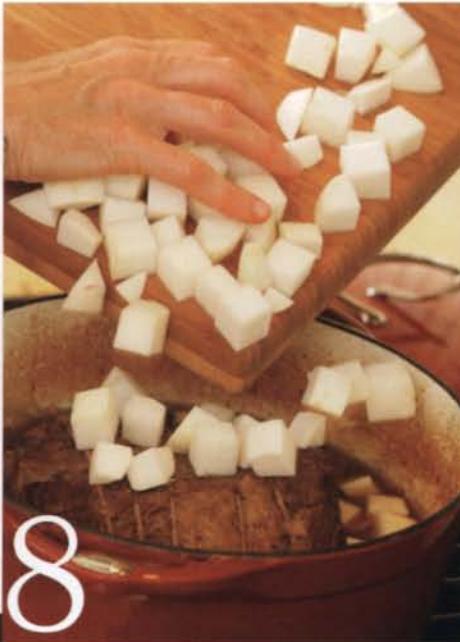
Add the braising liquid and bring to a simmer. There should be at least 1 inch of braising liquid in the pot. Add more if needed.

Continued...



Cook the pot roast for about 2 hours.

Return the meat to the pot, along with the bacon or pancetta and any juices that have accumulated. Return the liquid to a simmer, cover the pot with a sheet of parchment, pushing down so the paper touches the meat. There's no need to cut a circle; the parchment should be crumpled and will extend over the rim. Set the lid in place. (If your pot doesn't have a tight lid, cover the pot tightly with heavy-duty foil, crimping it well over the edges.) Slide the pot into the oven and cook for 2 hours, turning the roast with tongs after 1 hour.



Add the vegetables and finish cooking the roast for 1 to 1½ hours.

Choose up to four, peeled and cut into ¾-inch chunks, to total about 6 cups:

Carrots
Celery root
Parsnips
Frozen pearl onions (leave whole, add frozen)
Potatoes (yellow, red, or fingerling; avoid russets)
Rutabagas
Turnips

Turn the roast once more and then scatter the vegetables into the liquid around the roast. Continue braising, covered with the parchment and the lid, until the meat is fork-tender, about an hour longer. Test for doneness by spearing the meat toward the center with a carving fork. Pull out the fork carefully: If it lifts the meat along with it, continue cooking for another 20 to 30 minutes.



Strain and degrease the braising liquid.

Transfer the pot roast and vegetable accompaniments to a shallow platter (don't worry if a few finely chopped aromatics and bits of bacon or pancetta come along too); tent with foil.

Strain the sauce into a measuring cup, discarding the spent aromatics and sachet of flavorings. Let the fat rise to the surface and spoon it off. Wipe out the braising pot with a paper towel.

If serving right away, return the juices to the pot and move on to step 10.

If working ahead, return the meat and vegetables to the pot. Pour the strained juices over the meat and vegetables; let cool to room temperature. Cover and refrigerate for up to three days. See the sidebar at right ("For the best flavor...") for reheating instructions.

You're creating a marvelous cycle of flavor exchange: the juices mingle, the liquid bastes the meat, and the parts are transformed into a greater whole.

For the best flavor, make the pot roast up to three days ahead

Pot roast may be served right away, but like most braises, it tastes even better when made ahead and left to sit for a day or two. Follow the method through step 9, cooling and storing the roast as directed. To serve, gently reheat the roast in the pot until the juices are once again liquefied. Transfer the meat and vegetables to a baking dish, moisten with some of the juices, cover, and heat in a 325°F oven until warmed through, 30 to 40 minutes. While the meat and vegetables are warming, proceed to step 10 to make the sauce with the remaining juices.



10

11

Enhance the juices to make a sauce.

Bring the strained, degreased juices to a simmer over medium heat. Taste and evaluate. If the flavor seems weak, simmer vigorously over medium-high heat to reduce the volume and concentrate the flavor, 5 to 15 minutes; season to taste with salt and pepper. To further enhance the sauce, whisk in one or two of the following finishing touches.

Choose one or two:

- Splash of vinegar (wine, cider, or sherry)**
- Squeeze of fresh lemon juice**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- 1 tablespoon prepared horseradish**
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard**
- 2 tablespoons chopped capers**
- 2 tablespoons chopped olives**
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter**
- ½ cup crème fraîche or sour cream**

Slice, sauce, and serve.

Snip the strings from the pot roast and carve the meat across the grain into ¼- to ½-inch-thick slices. (Chuck roast comprises several different muscles, so you may want to pull apart the various pieces with your hands and then slice each piece across its grain.) Arrange the meat on a serving platter. Ladle about half the sauce over all, garnish with the vegetables, and serve, passing the remaining sauce at the table.

Molly Stevens, a contributing editor to Fine Cooking, is the author of the award-winning All About Braising: The Art of Uncomplicated Cooking. ♦

Singapore Noodles

A Cantonese Classic

Stir-fried noodles with a flavor bonus—pork tenderloin that leaves enough for dinner tomorrow night

BY NATHAN FONG

Singapore noodles, an explosion of many flavors in one simple dish, reflects the dazzling mix of Asian cultures that is Singapore. Although the noodles bear Singapore's name, they were actually invented by Cantonese chefs who were likely so taken with Singapore's vibrant cultural mix that they wanted to create a dish to honor it.

I was first introduced to Singapore noodles as a kid in Vancouver when a major influx of Asian immigrants moved to Canada in the early '70s. I immediately fell in love with the varying textures and flavors: soft, chewy vermicelli, crunchy vegetables, and

the savory-sweet interplay of the Chinese barbecued pork, curry, and soy and oyster sauces. With a little planning, it's easy to recreate this delicious dish at home.

Work ahead so everything's ready

As with many Asian dishes, Singapore noodles require some up-front time preparing the ingredients. But much of this can be done ahead so that all you're left to do at the last minute is the stir-frying. For instance, the barbecued pork (it's actually broiled; the barbecue is in the flavorings) must be marinated at least several hours ahead. If you're using dried mushrooms, you can

soak and slice them up to two days ahead and refrigerate them. The celery, onion, and green pepper can be chopped a day ahead, wrapped well, and refrigerated. The rice vermicelli noodles—the foundation of the dish—can be soaked up to four hours ahead and spread on a dishtowel. They may clump up, but they'll loosen again during cooking.

When you're ready to start stir-frying, confirm that all your ingredients are prepped and measured, and then line up everything in the order you'll use them. The cooking moves quickly, and you don't want to have to stop to peel shrimp or mince ginger in the middle of it all.



A shortcut for dinner tonight

Instead of making the long-marinated barbecued pork for the Singapore noodles, try substituting honey-cured ham, leftover roasted chicken or turkey, or firm tofu.

Singapore Noodles (Sing Jau Chow Mai)

Serves four to six as a side dish; three to four as a main course.

If you can't find small shrimp at the market, cut medium or large ones into smaller pieces.

4 dried or fresh shiitake mushrooms
6 ounces fine dry rice vermicelli
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
1½ tablespoons Madras (hot) curry powder
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ cup homemade or low-salt chicken or vegetable broth
2 tablespoons low-salt soy sauce
2 teaspoons granulated sugar
1 teaspoon hot chile paste
½ teaspoon kosher salt
1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
½ cup very thinly sliced celery (2 inches long)
½ cup thinly sliced yellow onion
½ cup very thinly sliced green bell pepper
½ cup bean sprouts, rinsed and well drained
4 scallions, root ends trimmed, white and green parts cut into 2-inch pieces
½ pound small shrimp, peeled and deveined
6 ounces Chinese barbecued pork (see the recipe at right), cut into 2-inch matchsticks (about 1 cup)
1½ tablespoons oyster sauce

If using dried shiitakes, soak them in hot water until softened, about 30 minutes. Drain well. For dried and fresh mushrooms, remove and discard the woody stems. Slice the caps thinly.

Put the vermicelli in a heatproof bowl with enough very hot water to cover. Soak until softened, 8 to 10 minutes. Drain well. If you like, cut the noodles with a knife or kitchen scissors to shorter lengths (4 or 5 inches) at this time. Loosen the noodles and spread them on a dishtowel to dry while you proceed.

Put 1 tablespoon of the oil in a small saucepan and heat over medium heat. Add the curry powder and half of the minced garlic and sauté for 20 seconds. Add the broth, soy sauce, sugar, chile paste, and salt. Cover and cook for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Heat a large wok or sauté pan over high heat, add 1 tablespoon of the oil, and tilt the pan to coat. When hot, add the remaining garlic and the ginger. Stir-fry until the garlic is golden, 10 to 20 seconds. Add the celery, onion, green pepper, bean sprouts, scallions, and reserved mushrooms. Stir-fry until crisp-tender, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer the vegetables to a plate and set aside.

Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon oil in the pan over high heat. When the oil is hot, add the shrimp and stir-fry until just cooked through, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the barbecued pork; toss well. Add the noodles, vegetables, soy-curry mixture, and oyster sauce. Toss to mix thoroughly and to coat noodles with the sauce. Serve immediately.



Make classic Chinese pork a day ahead

You'll need a little less than half of the pork tenderloin for Singapore noodles. Add leftover pork to fried rice, sandwiches, soups, stir-fries, scrambled eggs, or omelets, or eat the pork on its own with steamed bok choy and rice.

Barbecued Pork (Char Siu)

Yields about 1 pound; enough for Singapore Noodles, plus leftovers for two.

You'll need to marinate the pork at least 6 hours, or better yet, overnight.

1 1- to 1¼-pound pork tenderloin, trimmed
¼ cup soy sauce
¼ cup honey
1 tablespoon dry sherry
2 tablespoons hoisin sauce
½ teaspoon five-spice powder
⅛ teaspoon kosher salt
⅛ teaspoon ground white pepper

Cut small incisions in the pork at 1-inch intervals so the marinade can penetrate the meat. In a medium bowl, combine the soy sauce, honey, sherry, hoisin sauce, five-spice powder, salt, and pepper. Add the pork; rub to coat well. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate a minimum of 6 hours or overnight. Turn the pork occasionally as it marinates.

Position a rack about 6 inches from the broiler and heat the broiler. Set a rack in a small roasting pan and add ¼ inch of water to the pan. Remove the pork from the marinade (discard the marinade) and lay it on the rack. Broil with the oven door closed, turning the tenderloin after 10 minutes, until an instant-read thermometer registers 145°F, 15 to 20 minutes total; keep an eye on it to avoid burning. Let cool before using.

Nathan Fong, a food stylist and food writer, lives in Vancouver. ♦

Easy Puréed Soups, with the Flavors of Fall

Get deliciously deep flavors and silky-smooth texture in forty-five minutes or less

BY JILL SILVERMAN HOUGH

The earthy sweetness and hearty texture unique to fall vegetables can be coaxed to delicious perfection in many ways—but it's in a puréed soup that those wonderful qualities really shine. For the velvety, satisfying fall soups that follow, all you have to do is brown some vegetables, add broth, simmer until everything is tender, and then purée. It's that simple.

To create even more depth and dimension, I layer on an interesting flavor or two, adding ingredients to the sauté early on, as well as stirring them in after puréeing. A garnish just before serving adds texture and flair. And if you want, you can enhance the texture by puréeing only part of the soup, for a silky-chunky counterpoint. I get especially good results when I do this with the *Mushroom & Sherry Soup* on p. 69.

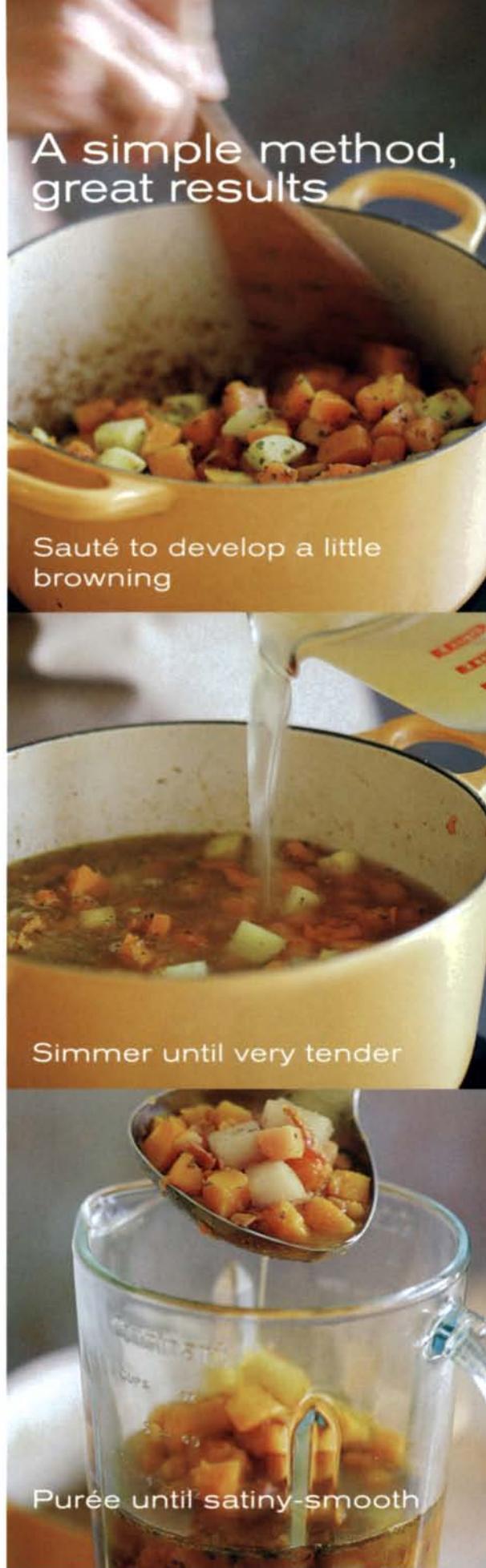
On a weeknight, I like these soups with a green salad and a baguette, or with grilled cheese sandwiches. But they're also ideal for weekends and entertaining because they make an easy and elegant first course. Also, all of these soups can be made up to two days ahead and then reheated before garnishing and serving.

A simple method,
great results

Sauté to develop a little browning

Simmer until very tender

Purée until satiny-smooth





Butternut Squash Soup with Apple & Bacon

Yields about 6½ to 7 cups; serves six to seven.

Smoky bacon, herby sage, and sweet apple give this squash soup layers of flavor.

- 8 slices bacon, cut crosswise into ¼-inch strips**
- 2½ pounds butternut squash (about 1 medium), peeled, seeded, and cut into ½-inch dice (to yield about 6 cups)**
- 1 small Granny Smith or other tart-sweet apple, peeled, cored, and cut into ½-inch dice (to yield about 1 cup)**
- 1½ tablespoons finely chopped fresh sage leaves**
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt**
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**
- 4 cups homemade or low-salt chicken or vegetable broth**

In a 5-quart or larger stockpot set over medium heat, cook the bacon, stirring occasionally, until crisp and golden, 8 to 10 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the bacon to a plate lined with paper towels.

Increase heat to medium high. Add the squash to the pot with the bacon fat and cook until lightly browned, 4 to 6 minutes (resist the urge to stir it too often or it won't brown). Stir in the apple, sage, salt, and pepper and cook for about 4 minutes (you'll see more browning occur on the bottom of the pot than on the vegetables). Add the broth, scraping up any browned bits in the pot with a wooden spoon. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce the heat to maintain a simmer, and cook until the squash and apples are very soft, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool somewhat.

Add about half the bacon to the soup and purée, using a stand or immersion blender (you'll need to work in batches if using a stand blender). Taste and add more salt and pepper if needed. Reheat the soup and garnish each serving with the remaining bacon.

Sweet parsnips with a subtle, salty contrast

Tips for the best puréed soups

Cut your vegetables small for faster cooking. A 1/2-inch dice needs no more than 10 minutes of simmering before it's soft enough to purée.

Don't stir the vegetables too often during the sauté; once every two minutes or so is good. This helps them brown, and that, in turn, will flavor your soup, giving it nuance beyond simply simmered vegetables.

Use a blender to get the smoothest soup. If you use a stand blender, be sure to let the liquid cool slightly, work in batches, and hold a towel over the lid to avoid overflowing. An immersion blender works well, too, and is even more convenient.

Don't be afraid of salt—it can make all the difference. Taste your soup before serving and add salt to taste. The flavors will get brighter and more pronounced.

Add an attractive garnish: It can really give the soup pizzazz. Use a sprig of an herb that's in your soup, a drizzle of a flavored oil, or a sprinkle of shredded cheese. A dollop of sour cream or crème fraîche can also enhance a simple puréed soup, making it party-fancy in both flavor and appearance.



Parsnip & Parmesan Soup

Yields 5 1/2 to 6 cups; serves five to six.

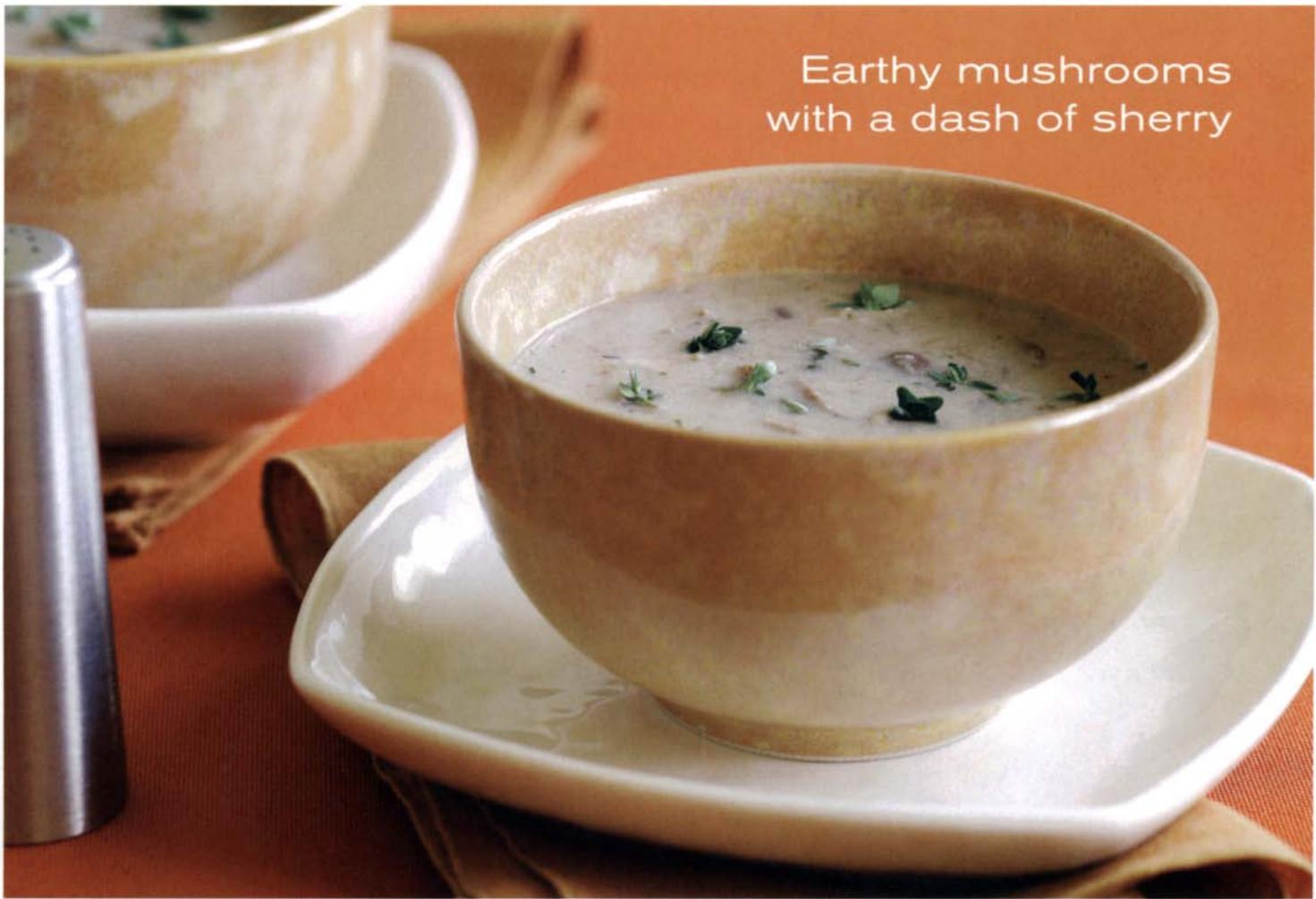
Salty and savory Parmigiano Reggiano marries well with sweet parsnips, and fresh oregano pulls it all together.

1/4 cup unsalted butter
1 1/2 pounds parsnips, peeled, trimmed, and cut into 1/2-inch dice (to yield a scant 4 cups)
6 ounces shallots, cut into 1/4-inch dice (to yield about 1 1/4 cups)
8 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh oregano; plus tiny sprigs for garnish
1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt; more to taste
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper; more to taste
4 1/2 cups homemade or low-salt chicken or vegetable broth
1 1/2 ounces (1/2 cup) freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano
2 teaspoons soy sauce
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice

Melt the butter in a 5-quart or larger stockpot set over medium heat.

While the butter is still foaming, add the parsnips and cook until lightly browned, 7 to 10 minutes (resist the urge to stir too often or they won't brown). Stir in the shallots, garlic, chopped oregano, salt, and pepper and cook until the shallots are very limp and the entire mixture is beginning to brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the broth, using a wooden spoon to scrape up any browned bits in the pot. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to maintain a low simmer, and cook until the parsnips are very soft, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool somewhat.

Purée the soup using a stand or immersion blender (you'll need to work in batches if using a stand blender). Return the soup to the pot and stir in the Parmigiano, soy sauce, and lemon juice. Taste and add more salt and pepper if needed. Reheat the soup and garnish each serving with an oregano sprig, if you like.



Earthy mushrooms
with a dash of sherry

These puréed soups
are quick enough for a
light weeknight supper,
yet special enough for
entertaining.

Wild Mushroom Soup with Sherry & Thyme

Yields about 5½ cups; serves six.

If you like, a drizzle of white truffle oil just before serving makes this soup especially fragrant and luxurious. For the mushrooms, I use a mix of half chanterelles or cremini and half shiitakes.

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium onion, cut into medium dice
(to yield about 1½ cups)
4 cloves garlic, minced
¾ pound fresh wild mushrooms, wiped
clean, trimmed (stems removed from
shiitakes), and thinly sliced (to yield
about 4½ cups)
2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon fresh
thyme leaves
½ teaspoon kosher salt; more to taste
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper;
more to taste
4 cups homemade or low-salt chicken or
vegetable broth
¼ cup half-and-half
3 tablespoons dry sherry
1 tablespoon soy sauce

Melt the butter and olive oil in a 5-quart or larger stockpot over medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook until it's beginning to brown (resist the urge to stir too often), about 4 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add the mushrooms, 2 tablespoons of the thyme, and the salt and pepper; cook until the mushrooms become limp, 2 to 4 minutes.

Add the broth, scraping up any browned bits in the pot with a wooden spoon. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce the heat to maintain a simmer, and cook until the mushrooms are tender, 7 to 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool slightly. Transfer about half of the soup to a stand blender and process until smooth. Return the mixture to the pot and stir in the half-and-half, sherry, and soy sauce. Add more salt and pepper to taste, if needed, and reheat. Garnish each serving with a small pinch of the remaining 1 teaspoon thyme.

Jill Silverman Hough, a food writer and cooking instructor, lives in Napa, California. ♦

The Sweeter Side of Cranberries

This versatile fall fruit livens up tarts, muffins, and cookies with its sweet-tart flavor

BY NICOLE REES

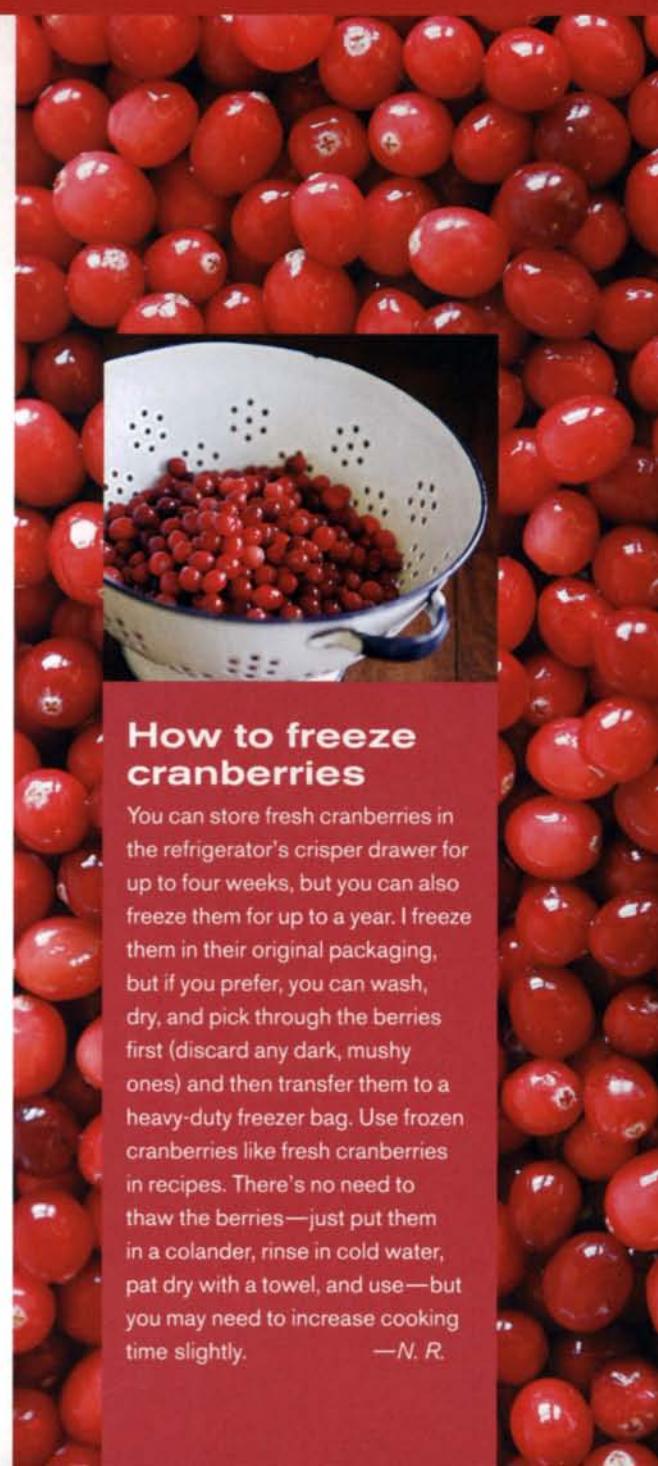
I'm not the sort of person who waits until Thanksgiving to enjoy cranberries. As soon as they show up in grocery stores in late September, I greedily pile bags of them into my cart. I can't help it. As a berry lover, I know these are the last in-season berries I'll see until strawberries start rolling into markets the next spring. Fortunately, cranberries freeze well, so it's easy to stock up. I just toss the bags right into the freezer and pull them out for recipes whenever I have a taste for their singular sweet-tart flavor.

Why bakers love cranberries. I think bakers in particular hold cranberries in high esteem. Their brightness doesn't fade with cooking, giving everything in which they're used a splash of color as well as flavor. In desserts, their delightful

tartness is a natural complement to the sweetness of fruits such as pears and apples. And even in dried form, the pure cranberry flavor comes through.

This trio of recipes really allows cranberries to shine. The classic flavor pairing of cranberry and orange gets a boost from ginger in the muffins on p. 72. Dried cranberries replace raisins in a delightfully jumbled—and jumbo—oatmeal cookie on p. 73. And cranberries steal the show in the festive tart at right.

Cranberries are for keeps. Cranberries have long been prized for their keeping qualities. Once upon a time, fresh cranberries were sent across the ocean in water-filled barrels, arriving at ports virtually unspoiled. Fresh cranberries last upwards of a month in the refrigerator, and up to a year in the freezer. In contrast to other berries, freezing won't diminish the flavor and texture of cranberries. I usually have a bag or two on hand at any given time during cranberry season, and since they keep so well, I don't have to rush to use them.



How to freeze cranberries

You can store fresh cranberries in the refrigerator's crisper drawer for up to four weeks, but you can also freeze them for up to a year. I freeze them in their original packaging, but if you prefer, you can wash, dry, and pick through the berries first (discard any dark, mushy ones) and then transfer them to a heavy-duty freezer bag. Use frozen cranberries like fresh cranberries in recipes. There's no need to thaw the berries—just put them in a colander, rinse in cold water, pat dry with a towel, and use—but you may need to increase cooking time slightly.

—N. R.



Festive Cranberry-Pear Tart in a Walnut Shortbread Crust

Yields one 9-inch tart; serves eight to twelve.

FOR THE WALNUT SHORTBREAD CRUST:

1 large egg yolk
1 tablespoon half-and-half
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
6 1/4 ounces (1 1/2 cups)
 unbleached all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons granulated sugar
1/2 teaspoon table salt
1/4 pound (1/2 cup) cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch dice
1/3 cup walnuts, toasted and finely chopped

FOR THE CRANBERRY-PEAR FILLING:

3 large ripe pears, such as Anjou or Bartlett
2 cups fresh cranberries, picked through and rinsed
1 tablespoon brandy
2/3 cup granulated sugar
2 teaspoons unbleached all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
1/8 teaspoon table salt

FOR THE BUTTERY BROWN SUGAR STREUSEL:

1 3/4 ounces (1/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon) unbleached all-purpose flour
1/4 cup packed light brown sugar
1/8 teaspoon table salt
1 ounce (2 tablespoons) unsalted butter, melted
1/4 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Make the crust: Position a rack near the center of the oven and heat the oven to 400°F. In a small bowl, mix the egg yolk, half-and-half, and vanilla. Put the flour, sugar, and salt in a food processor; pulse until combined. Add the butter and pulse until the butter pieces are no longer visible. With the processor running, add the yolk mixture in a steady stream and then pulse until the moisture is fairly evenly dispersed, 10 to 20 seconds. Transfer the mixture to a bowl. Using your hands, mix in the

chopped walnuts to distribute them evenly. The dough will be a mealy, crumbly mass.

Pour the crumb mixture into a 9 1/2-inch round fluted tart pan with a removable bottom (for sources, see p. 86). Starting with the sides of the pan, firmly press the crumbs against the pan to create a crust about 1/4 inch thick. Press the remaining crumbs evenly against the bottom of the pan. Prick the bottom of the crust all over with a fork and freeze for 10 minutes. Bake until the sides just begin to darken and the bottom is set, about 15 minutes. Transfer to a cooling rack. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F.

Make the filling: Peel the pears, quarter them lengthwise, core, and cut crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick slices.

In a food processor, coarsely chop the cranberries. In a medium bowl, mix the pears, cranberries, and brandy. In a small bowl, mix the sugar, flour,

cardamom, ginger, cinnamon, allspice, and salt; add to the cranberry-pear mixture, tossing to combine. Spoon the filling into the par-baked crust, leveling the filling and packing it down slightly with the back of a spoon.

Make the streusel and bake:

In a small bowl, mix the flour, brown sugar, and salt. Add the melted butter and vanilla. Combine with your fingers until the mixture begins to clump together in small pieces when pressed. Sprinkle the streusel over the filling, breaking it into smaller pieces if necessary.

Bake at 350°F until the fruit is tender when pierced with a fork and the streusel and the edges of the crust are golden brown, about 50 minutes. If the tart begins to get overly brown at the edges, cover with foil. Let the tart cool on a rack until it's just barely warm before serving. The tart will keep, covered and at room temperature, for two to three days.



Cranberries give sweet desserts a bright splash of color and a delightful tart flavor.

Cranberry-Orange Muffins

Yields 12 muffins.

1½ cups fresh cranberries, picked through and rinsed
9 ounces (2 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour; more for the pan
2 ounces (½ cup) cake flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon table salt
5 ounces (10 tablespoons) unsalted butter, softened at room temperature; more for the pan
¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
2 large eggs, at room temperature
1½ teaspoons finely grated orange zest (using a rasp-style zester, this is the zest of 1 small orange)
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 cup buttermilk, at room temperature
¼ cup fresh orange juice
2 tablespoons turbinado sugar (such as Sugar In The Raw)

Position a rack near the center of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F. Generously butter a standard 12-cup muffin tin, including the top rim, and dust the pan with flour. Tap out any excess.

Using a food processor, coarsely chop the cranberries.

In a medium bowl, mix the all-purpose flour, cake flour, baking powder, ginger, baking soda, and salt.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter and sugar on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Scrape the bowl. Beat in the eggs one at a time, mixing for at least 30 seconds at medium speed and scraping the bowl after each addition. Beat in the orange zest and vanilla. With the mixer on low speed, briefly beat in one-third of the flour mixture, then add ½ cup of the buttermilk; when combined, mix in another one-third of the flour; then mix in the remaining ½ cup buttermilk and the orange juice, and finally mix in the rest of the flour. Scrape the bowl and beat the batter just until smooth, another 10 seconds. Using a rubber spatula or a wooden spoon, fold the cranberries into the batter.

Spoon the batter evenly into the muffin tin (each cup will be quite full). Sprinkle the tops of the muffins generously with the turbinado sugar. Bake until the tops are golden and a skewer inserted an inch into the top of a muffin comes out clean, 15 to 18 minutes. Let the muffins cool in the pan for 5 minutes and then turn them out onto a wire rack to cool completely. These muffins are best eaten the day they're made.

Jumbo Cranberry Oatmeal Jumbles

Yields 16 to 18 big, chewy cookies.

If you're not a fan of white chocolate, you can omit it from this recipe and double the amount of dried cranberries instead.

6 ounces (3/4 cup) unsalted butter, softened at room temperature

1/2 cup granulated sugar

1/2 cup packed light brown sugar

1 large egg, at room temperature

1 tablespoon light corn syrup

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

6 3/4 ounces (1 1/2 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour

1 ounce (1/4 cup) cake flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon table salt

1/2 cup sweetened dried cranberries

1/2 cup rolled oats (old-fashioned, not quick-cooking)

1/2 cup pecan pieces (or coarsely chopped pecan halves), lightly toasted

1/2 cup sweetened coconut flakes, lightly toasted

3 1/2 ounces good-quality white chocolate, coarsely chopped (for sources, see p. 86)

Position two racks near the center of the oven and heat the oven to 325°F. Line three baking sheets with parchment.

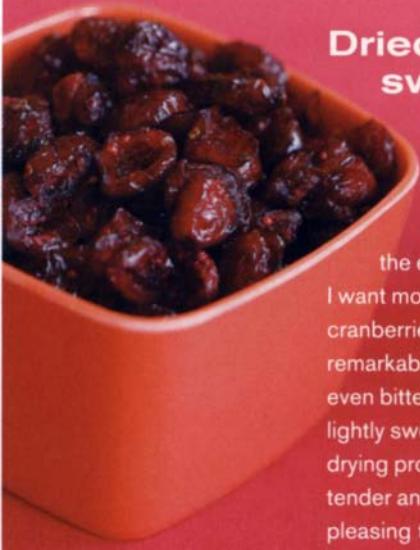
In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter and both sugars at medium speed until light and

fluffy, about 2 minutes. Scrape the bowl. Add the egg, corn syrup, and vanilla; beat for 1 minute on medium speed. Mix in half the all-purpose flour on low speed until thoroughly combined, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Scrape the bowl. Briefly mix in the remaining half of the all-purpose flour. Sprinkle the cake flour, baking soda, and salt into the bowl and beat on low speed until well blended, 30 seconds to 1 minute. With a wooden spoon or a rubber spatula, stir in the cranberries, oats, pecans, coconut, and white chocolate.

Using your fingertips, shape 2-ounce pieces of dough (about a scant 1/4 cup) into 2-inch diameter disks that are 1/2 inch thick. Space them at least 2 inches apart on the parchment-lined sheets. Bake until the cookies' edges and bottoms are golden and the centers feel dry on the surface but still soft inside, 15 to 16 minutes. When baking two pans of cookies at once, switch the position of the pans after 8 minutes for even browning. Let the cookies cool on the baking sheets for at least 1 minute before transferring them to a wire rack to cool completely. These cookies will keep for three or four days at room temperature or for several weeks in the freezer.



Dried cranberries: sweetened vs. unsweetened



I generally prefer to buy dried fruit that hasn't been sweetened, but cranberries are the exception. For my baking, I want moist, plump sweetened dried cranberries. Unsweetened ones are remarkably dry, astringent, sour, and even bitter. Fortunately, most producers lightly sweeten the berries during the drying process; it helps keep them tender and tasty but doesn't mask their pleasing tartness. —N. R.

Nicole Rees, co-author of Understanding Baking, lives and bakes in Portland, Oregon. ♦

knife skills

How to hold a chef's knife

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BY JENNIFER ARMENTROUT

While conducting our review of chef's knives on p. 22, we noticed some differences in the way our panel of testers held the knives. That's fine, since the best grip is the one that you personally are most comfortable with. That said, here's the grip favored by many cooking pros. Choking up on the knife blade like this might seem a little scary, but it's really not risky and with a little practice you'll find that this grip offers control and a good balance of dexterity and stability.



Hold the handle with your middle, ring, and pinkie fingers. Rest your index finger flat against the blade near the handle (curl the finger back toward the handle), and position your thumb on the opposite side of the blade.



Always curl in the fingertips of the hand not holding the knife. This protects them from being cut and allows you to use your knuckles as a guide for aligning the knife as you slice.

How to trim kale



Unlike spinach and chard, kale leaves take a while to cook to a tender texture, and kale stems are nearly impervious to tenderizing. That's why the first step in preparing kale is trimming the stems. The aim is not just to trim the stems below the leaves, but also to remove most of the stem from the center of the leaf, where it acts like a supporting rib. To do this, lay a leaf upside down on a cutting board and use a paring knife to cut a V shape along both sides of the rib, cutting it free from the leaf.

The kale shown here is black kale, a.k.a. Tuscan kale, lacinato kale, cavalo nero, or dinosaur kale. This blue-green kale is the variety author Bill Telepan prefers for his recipe on p. 51.

Cook pasta for soups separately

For the Golden Chicken, Corn & Orzo Soup on p. 90a, you might wonder why the orzo is cooked separately. There are two reasons. If you boiled the orzo directly in the soup, the starch from the pasta would cloud the soup broth, and the orzo would also suck up too much of the soup broth as it cooked. Boiling the pasta separately solves both of these problems, and that's why it's well worth the minor trouble of boiling a separate pot of water whenever you want to include pasta in a soup.

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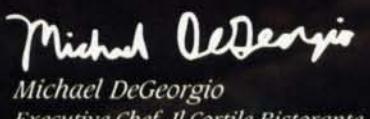

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Ciao Italia


Gary G. Mitchell
Corporate Executive Chef
Joe's American Bar & Grill
Papa Razzi Trattoria Bar


Jeffrey Starr
Culinary Director & Executive Chef
Trinchero Family Estates


Adam Baird
VP Food/Beverage, Mimis Cafe

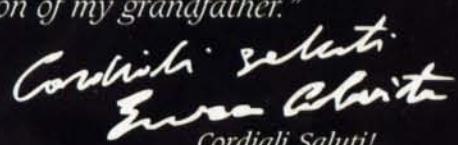

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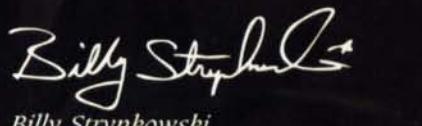


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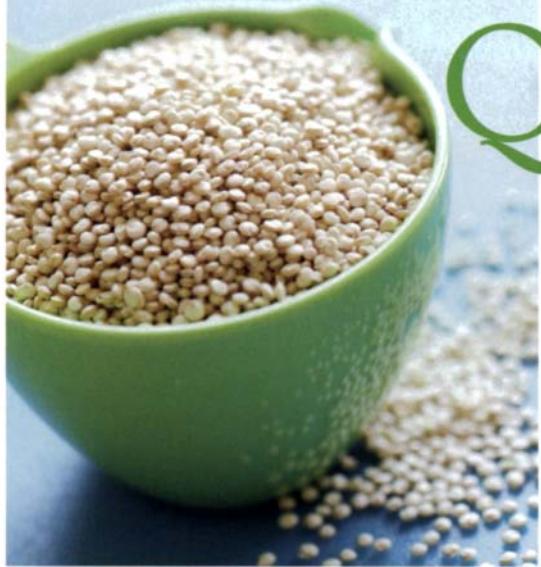

Billy Strykowsky
Executive Chef, Cooking Light Magazine


Mike Colameco
Colameco's Food Show


Frank Dameron
Sr. Director, Culinary Operations
Wyndham Hotels & Resorts


Stephan B. Hickey
Chief Marketing Officer, BUCA, Inc.


Micol Negrin
Author, "Rustico: Regional Italian Country Cooking"
Owner, Rustico Cooking, NYC



Quinoa

Considering its nutritional profile, it's a wonder that quinoa isn't more well known. Once a revered food staple of the ancient Inca, quinoa (pronounced KEEN-wah) is packed with high-quality protein. In fact, at as much as 20% protein, it has more protein than any other whole grain. Add to that a good dose of B vitamins, iron, calcium, potassium, magnesium, and vitamin E, and it's easy to see why

quinoa flies out of the bulk bins at health-food stores.

For those of you thinking, "Yeah, but how does it taste?" the answer is: damned good. It's a mild, slightly sweet grain with hints of corn, nuts, and grass. But what makes quinoa really interesting is its texture. When cooked, the germ falls away and retains an ever-so-slight crunch, while the seed itself becomes tender and light.

Cooking with quinoa

If you can cook white rice, then you can cook quinoa. The formula (2:1 liquid to grain) and method are pretty much the same. Bring it to a boil, reduce the heat to a simmer, cover, and cook until the water is absorbed. It cooks faster than rice, in about 10 to 15 minutes, making it the fastest cooking whole grain out there. Just be sure to fluff it well with a fork before serving.

Before cooking quinoa—and this is important—rinse it well to rid it of its coating of saponin, a bitter, soapy-tasting natural substance that protects the plant from insects and birds. Most quinoa is processed to remove much of the saponin, so submersion and a good swishing in a bowl of cool water is all it takes to finish the process. But some quinoa may need more rinsing: If the water

appears very cloudy, keep rinsing in fresh water until the cloudiness is almost gone.

Quinoa is a blank canvas when it comes to flavor pairings. It marries well with lots of other ingredients and readily goes in whatever flavor direction you want to push it. Try preparing it like a pilaf by simmering it in broth with softened diced shallot. Or, fold toasted nuts, chopped fresh herbs, or

crisp vegetables like diced bell peppers or corn kernels into plain cooked quinoa. Or turn it into a versatile salad like the tabbouleh below.

To buy quinoa, visit your local natural-foods store. Some well-stocked supermarkets, especially those that have a natural foods section, also carry quinoa. For a mail-order source, see p. 86.

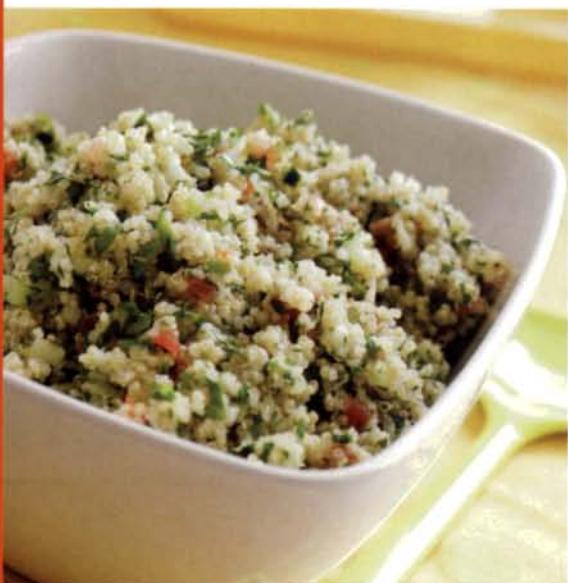
Minty Quinoa Tabbouleh

Yields about 8 cups.

Tabbouleh, a lemony Middle Eastern parsley and grain salad, is traditionally made with bulgur wheat. This version, fragrant from a touch of cumin and cinnamon, uses quinoa instead.

1½ cups quinoa
Kosher salt
1½ cups seeded and finely diced tomato (from about 1 large tomato)
1 cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley (from about 2 bunches)
1 cup peeled, seeded, finely diced cucumber (from about ¾ of a large cucumber)
½ cup thinly sliced scallion greens
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil; more to taste
6 tablespoons fresh lemon juice; more to taste
¼ teaspoon ground cumin
⅛ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ cup finely chopped fresh mint

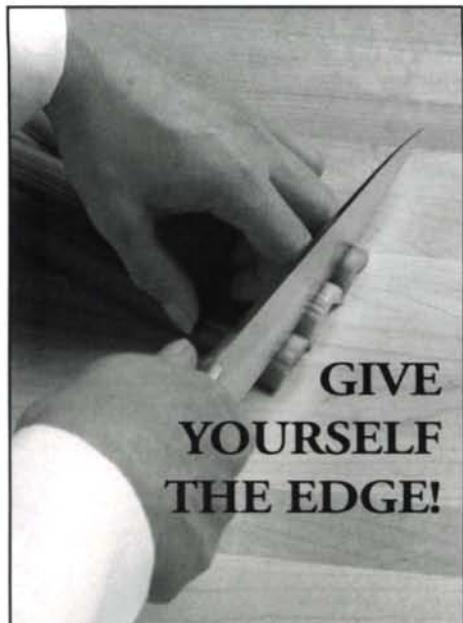
Rinse the quinoa well in a bowl of cool water and drain. Bring the quinoa, ½ tea-



spoon salt, and 3 cups water to a boil in a medium saucepan over high heat. Cover, reduce the heat to medium low, and simmer until the water is absorbed and the quinoa is translucent and tender, 10 to 15 minutes. (The outer germ rings of the grain will remain chewy and white. Some germ rings may separate from the grains and will look like white squiggles.) Immediately fluff the quinoa with a fork and turn out onto a baking sheet to cool.

When cool, fluff the quinoa again and transfer to a large bowl. Add the tomato, parsley, cucumber, scallion, oil, lemon juice, cumin, cinnamon, and 1 teaspoon salt. Toss well. Cover and refrigerate to let the flavors mingle, at least 2 hours or overnight.

Before serving, let sit at room temperature for 20 to 30 minutes. Stir in the mint. Taste and add more oil and lemon juice (you'll probably need at least 1 tablespoon of each), and more salt as needed.



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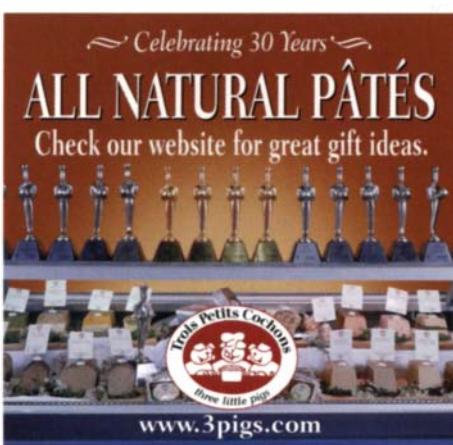
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3 Fresh cheeses worth getting to know

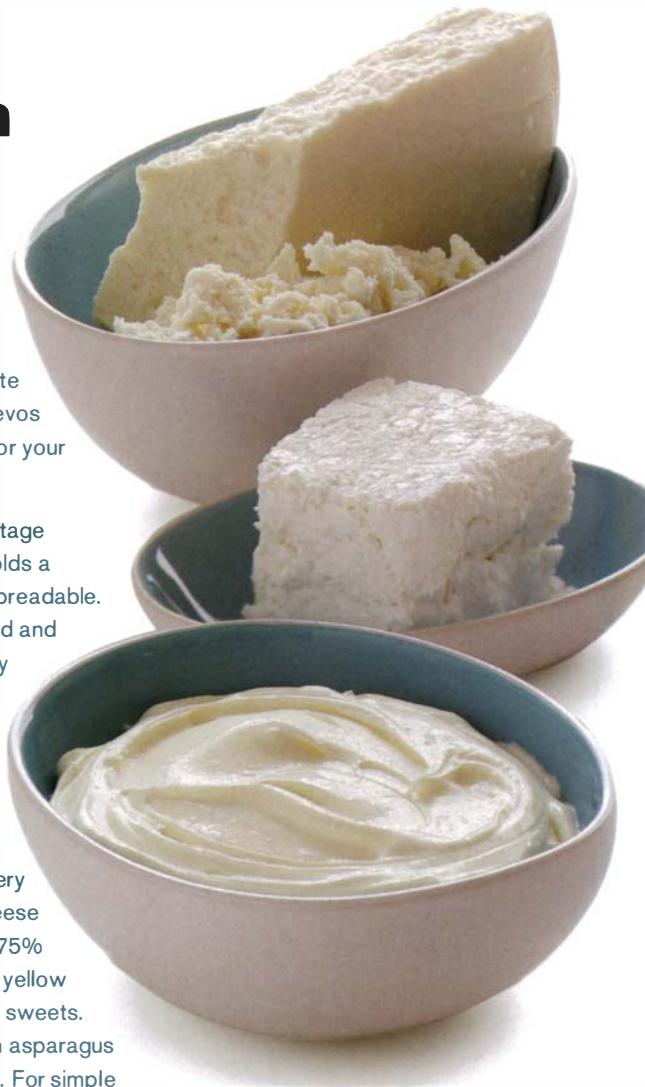
In the cheese world, fresh cheeses—those that are unripened and can be made in just a couple of days—are a large and diverse group. You're probably already familiar with the subtle and delicate flavors of mainstream fresh cheeses, such as cottage cheese, cream cheese, ricotta, and fresh goat cheese, but there are others out there worth getting to know. Here are three versatile, alternative varieties that you may never have tried before.

—Allison Ebri,
test kitchen associate

Queso fresco, a Mexican pressed cheese originally made from goat's milk, is now more widely produced from cow's milk. Used generously in Mexican cuisine, it's quite salty and crumbly. Crumble it over huevos rancheros, tortilla soup, black beans, or your favorite tacos.

Farmer cheese is pressed cottage cheese, and as a result is drier and holds a shape (often rectangular) but is still spreadable. Made from cow's milk, it's lightly salted and has a slightly coarse texture and a very mild tanginess. Commonly used in pierogies, blintzes, and cheesecake, farmer cheese adds richness to the Peppery Egg Noodle & Cauliflower Gratin on p. 49.

Mascarpone is a thick and buttery double- to triple-cream cow's milk cheese (containing over 60% and often over 75% milk fat). It's slightly sweet with a faint yellow hue and spans dishes from starters to sweets. Try mixing mascarpone into pasta with asparagus and mushrooms, or fold it into polenta. For simple desserts, serve mascarpone with fresh figs, pears, or berries, or dollop a spoonful alongside fruit pies or tarts.



Ponzu: a citrusy soy sauce for dipping and more



Ponzu is a tangy, citrus-flavored soy sauce that's popular in Japanese cuisine as a dipping sauce for dishes like sashimi (thinly sliced raw fish) and tataki (thinly sliced seared rare meat or fish). Cooking with ponzu sauce isn't traditional, but we like to use it as an ingredient because it's all at once sour, salty, sweet, and savory—a real boon to have in the

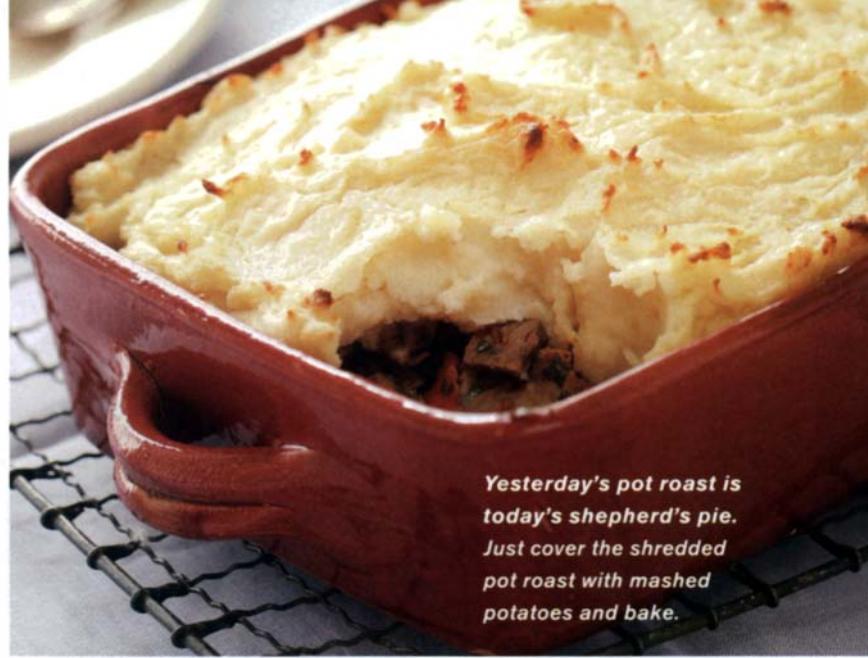
fridge, especially for the quick cook. Kikkoman makes a bottled ponzu sauce that's nationally available, and this is what we used to test the recipe for Stir-Fried Beef with Snow Peas & Shiitakes on p. 90a. Mixed with a little oil, ponzu makes a quick salad dressing or marinade, and it's also good sprinkled over plain steamed, broiled, or grilled fish.

Make your own

Though it won't be completely authentic, you can make a ponzu-style sauce with ingredients from your pantry. For every $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of ponzu needed, mix 2 tablespoons soy sauce, 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, 1 tablespoon rice vinegar, and a scant $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sugar.

Pot Roast Revisited

One of the great things about braised dishes like pot roast is that their flavors only deepen with time, which means that their leftovers are a real treat. You can simply reheat pot roast and enjoy it again in its original form, or you can present it in other ways. Here are a few suggestions, born out of the surplus of pot roast we had in the test kitchen when we were testing our "Making a Succulent Beef Pot Roast" feature on p. 58.



Yesterday's pot roast is today's shepherd's pie. Just cover the shredded pot roast with mashed potatoes and bake.

Turn leftover pot roast into a different dish

Pot roast patties

Using cold leftover pot roast that includes potatoes, separate the meat and vegetables as best you can from the gelatinous sauce. Chop up the meat and vegetables, and mix together in a bowl with a tablespoon or two of Dijon mustard (which adds flavor and also helps the mixture hold together). Shape into patties and sauté in oil or butter over medium to medium-high heat until crusty and browned on the outside and hot on the inside.

French dip sandwiches

Slice baguettes into 5- or 6-inch lengths and then split them almost but not entirely in half lengthwise. (Or use crusty sub rolls.) Heat the leftovers until hot. Slice the meat and arrange in the baguettes. Serve the sandwiches with individual dishes of the sauce on the side for dipping. Hot mustard is a good condiment for these sandwiches, and you can serve the leftover vegetables as a side dish or save them for another meal.

Shepherd's pie

Warm the leftovers just enough to liquefy the sauce. Shred or chop the meat and combine with the vegetables. Add enough sauce to make the mixture taste nicely moist but not super juicy. Transfer the mixture to a casserole dish and cover with a 1-inch layer of mashed potatoes (flavored with Cheddar or horseradish, if you like). Drizzle the potatoes with a little olive oil and then bake in a 375°F oven until the potatoes are lightly browned on top, about 30 minutes.

A cheesecloth pouch for infusing flavor

In her pot roasting method on p. 58, contributing editor Molly Stevens uses a cheesecloth pouch, known as a sachet, to hold ingredients like citrus zest, whole spices, and fresh herb sprigs so they can be easily removed once they've lent their flavor to the sauce. To make a sachet, cut a large single-layer square of cheesecloth and then rinse it to remove any loose fibers. Squeeze it dry and then spread it on the counter. Pile your ingredients in the center and gather the edges of the cloth around the ingredients, like a beggar's pouch. Tightly wrap a length of twine several times around the neck of



the pouch and tie it closed. If you leave a long tail of twine attached to the pouch, you can loosely tie the tail to the handle of the pot once you add the sachet. This makes it simple to find the sachet when the time comes to remove it.

tip: Careful with the salt when making gravy

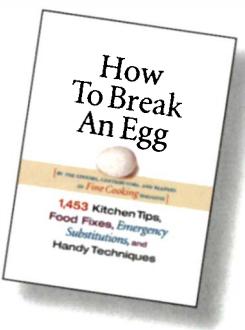
If you're planning to make gravy using drippings from a brined or salted turkey (like the one on p. 45), we'd like to remind you to be judicious with the salt when making your gravy. Drippings from a brined turkey tend to be pretty salty, so wait until you can taste the gravy before you add even a pinch of salt.

Pie pitfalls & how to avoid them

If you're a beginning baker, there's probably not much you find more intimidating than making a pastry pie crust. Take heart in knowing that no one is born a great pie maker. The cure for pastry intimidation is experience plus an understanding of pastry mechanics.

We can't help you with the experience part—other than to keep publishing tempting pie and tart recipes—but we can aid you in the area of general pastry knowledge. To that end, here's a handy chart that will help you troubleshoot the next time a pie doesn't quite hit the

mark. If you'd like more troubleshooting charts like this one, check out *Fine Cooking's* newest book, *How to Break an Egg: 1,453 Kitchen Tips, Food Fixes, Emergency Substitutions, and Handy Techniques*—this chart is excerpted from the book.



THE PROBLEM	POSSIBLE CAUSES	FIX-IT TIPS FOR NOW OR NEXT TIME
Pie dough is still dry even after adding all the cold water specified	Pieces of fat cut into the flour were left too large. Dough needed to be kneaded briefly. Flour required more hydration due to type or seasonal variability.	First, try mixing the fat into the dough with your fingertips. If still dry and crumbly, add more cold water, 1 tablespoon at a time. When the dough just starts to look like it's coming together, stop and knead briefly to form a cohesive mass. Small pieces of fat should be visible in the dough.
Chilled pie dough cracks when rolled out	Dough was too cold or not kneaded enough, making the edges of the dough disk ragged and dry. Also, the dough may not have rested enough to allow the flour to hydrate evenly.	If there are many cracks and the edges seem dry, gather the dough into a ball. Chill for 20 minutes and try again: the rolling should be easier now that the dough has been mixed more from handling. One or two cracks can be fixed by brushing with water and rolling the edges together to seal. Next time, allow the dough to warm up slightly if very cold and roll as evenly as possible near the edges to prevent cracking.
Baked pie crust is tough	Dough was kneaded too much after the water was added. Or, the dough wasn't relaxed after rolling.	Next time, stop mixing as soon as the dough just begins to come together after the water is added. Don't rush the process. Then let the dough rest after rolling in the refrigerator for at least 25 minutes to allow the flour to hydrate and the gluten structure to relax.
Baked pie crust is crumbly and mealy	Fat and flour were overmixed in the dough: visible pieces of fat should remain in the dough. When baked, these pieces will melt, leaving air pockets behind and thus making the crust flaky. Also, the dough may contain too much fat.	Next time, stop cutting in fat when most of the pieces are pea-size. Some pieces will be smaller, but the baked crust will resemble crumbly shortbread if the fat is thoroughly mixed in. If still crumbly, reduce the amount of fat.
Pie browns poorly	Crust was underbaked or contained bleached flour. Doughs that include an acid like lemon juice or vinegar to make rolling easier will brown less readily.	Next time, use unbleached flour for the crust. Brush milk or sugar on the dough to facilitate browning if you use an acid in the dough.
Bottom crust is soggy and pale	Not enough heat was directed to bottom crust. Or, the cut fruit and sugar sat too long before the pie was assembled, causing the fruit to release its juice before baking. For custard pies, the shell was not adequately prebaked.	For crisp crusts, bake pies and tarts on a preheated baking sheet situated near the bottom of the oven. Next time, don't let the fruit and sugar mixture sit more than 15 minutes before baking. Prebake the crust for custard pies whenever possible.

Chart by Nicole Rees



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1 jar Dickinson's® Lemon Curd
 1 jar Dickinson's® Pure Seedless Black Raspberry Preserves
 Graham Cracker Pie Crust, prepared
 2 small boxes Instant Vanilla Pudding Mix
 1 3/4 c. Milk
 1 8-oz. container Whipped Topping
 In a large bowl, mix milk and pudding. Beat with a wire whisk till smooth. Stir Curd into pudding, then fold in whipped topping. Pour mixture into pie crust. Chill until set. Sofen Preserves with a spoon, then spread on top of pie. Chill. Makes 6-8 servings. *Our Lime Curd would also be great in this recipe!*



Apple-Chipotle Shrimp



1 jar Dickinson's® Apple Butter
 2 Tbsp. Dickinson's® Lime or Lemon Curd
 1 Tbsp. Balsamic Vinegar
 1 Tbsp. Olive Oil
 1 Tbsp. Chipotle Sauce
 Place all of the ingredients except the seafood in a food processor. Process until marinade is smooth. Place seafood in a large freezer storage bag & marinate 1-2 hours, turning occasionally. Grill or broil seafood. Pour marinade into a small saucepan & cook 2-3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove, brush on seafood every 2-3 minutes while grilling/broiling. Discard marinade. Makes 6-8 serving.



Apple-Berry Salsa with Cinnamon Chips



1/2 jar Dickinson's® Apple Butter
 1/2 jar Dickinson's® Pure Seedless Pacific Mountain® Strawberry Preserves
 Chips: 2-3 lg. Flour Tortillas, Water, 1 Tbsp. Sugar, 1/2 tsp. Cinnamon

Preheat oven to 400°F. Brush tortillas with water. Combine sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle over tortillas; cut each tortilla into 8 wedges. Place wedges on cookie sheet. Bake 5-7 minutes or until golden brown. Remove and cool. Combine Apple Butter, Preserves, fruits, orange zest and juice in bowl. Serve fruit salsa with cinnamon chips. Makes about 3 cups of salsa.



Citrus Coconut Trifle



1 jar Dickinson's® Lemon or Lime Curd
 1 jar Dickinson's® Pure Marion Blackberry Preserves
 1 small box Instant Coconut Cream Pudding Mix, prepared as directed
 1 10-oz. Pound or Angel Food Cake
 1 8-oz. container Whipped Topping

Fold Curd into prepared pudding. Cut cake horizontally & spread with Preserves, then cut cake into 1" cubes. In a trifle dish, layer cake, pudding & whipped topping, in that order. Garnish with optional lime peel or mint leaves. Makes 8-10 servings. *Try substituting with your favorite flavor of Dickinson's Preserves.*



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Tomato Paste

Rather than being a starring ingredient in cooking, tomato paste is usually a supporting player, intensifying the flavor of other tomato components in a meat sauce or marinara, or adding tomatoey nuance to a vegetable braise or beef stew.

But even though tomato paste plays a supporting role, it needs to be the essence of tomatoes: it should taste deeply flavored, balancing acidity and the sweet-fruit flavors of tomato. When ten *Fine Cooking* staffers sat down recently to taste six nationally available tomato pastes straight, there were two clear winners and four runners-up. Read on to find out which brands have the most concentrated tomato flavor to make your sauces and stews sing.

—Amy Albert,
senior editor

First-place tie



AMORE

(\$2.69 for a 4½-ounce tube)
"Sweet on the attack with a decidedly acidic kick," is how one taster described this paste, which others found intensely tomatoey as well as tangy and bright. Panelists thought that its strong tanginess would hold up well in a sauce.

BIONATURAE

(\$1.79 for a 7-ounce jar)
Panelists liked the sweet and tart balance and zingy, rich tomato flavors in this tomato-red paste, which had a slightly thinner consistency than some expect from tomato paste.

Runners-up Tomato pastes numbered in order of preference; prices will vary.



3 CONTADINA

(69¢ for a 6-ounce can)
Tasters' reactions were mixed, with some praising this paste for its balance of sweet and tangy tomatoey flavors. Others found it on the acidic side and said it was fine, but not dazzling.



4 CENTO

(67¢ for a 6-ounce can)
"A sense of tomatoes but not the real thing," said one taster of this paste, which panelists found dense in texture but timid in flavor, muted, and lacking tomatoey oomph.



5 MUIR GLEN

(99¢ for a 6-ounce can)
This paste had a mild and balanced flavor, but it just didn't say tomato. A few panelists detected some bitterness.



6 HUNT'S

(67¢ for a 6-ounce can)
Tasters detected artificial flavors, and too much salt, which overpowered any tomato flavor in this dark red paste.

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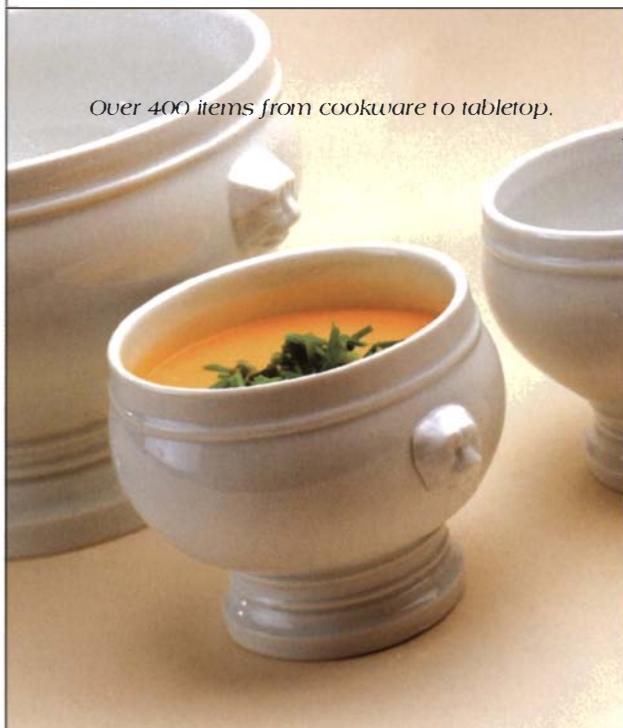
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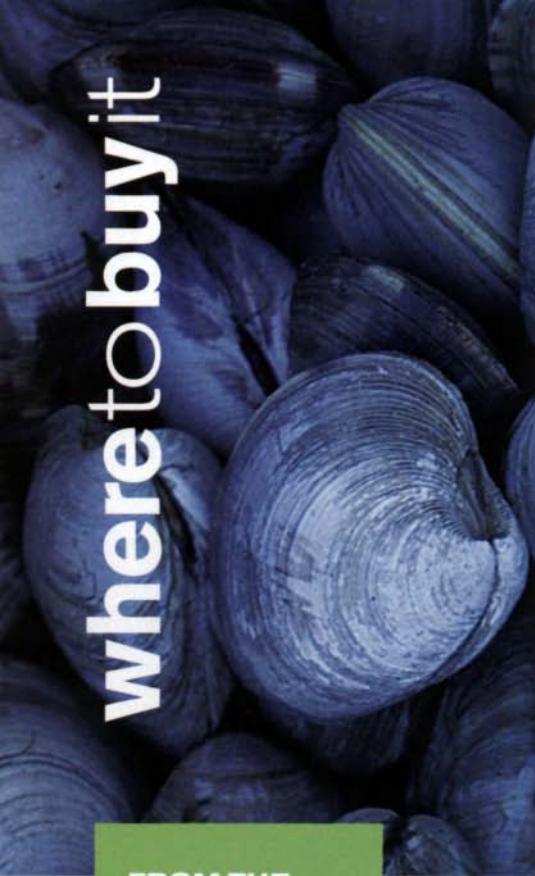
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FROM THE BACK COVER

For more information on Barb and Pat Woodbury's littleneck clams and oysters, visit Woodburyclams.com or call 877-782-5283.



Thanksgiving, p. 42

For roasting turkey, we recently tried and liked the Cuisipro Roast and Serve roasting rack. Handles make the rack easy to lift from roasting pan to carving board; once the bird is on the board, pull the removable pin in the center of the rack and the sides are easy to pull away, saving you from having to haul the turkey out of the rack. The rack sells for \$28 at Professional Cutlery Direct (PCD.com; 800-859-6994).

Pumpkin Tart, p. 52

To make this tart, you'll need a 10-inch fluted tart pan with a removable bottom. Look in kitchen stores or visit Bridgekitchenware.com (212-688-4220), which sells them for \$13.75.

Warm Salads, p. 54

To add heat to his Spinach Salad with Stir-Fried Pork & Warm Ginger Vinaigrette, Tony Rosenfeld suggests using Sriracha, an Asian hot chile sauce. It's available in Asian markets and in the Asian section of some supermarkets; you can also buy it at Ethnicgrocer.com, where a 17-ounce bottle sells for \$3.61.

Pot Roast, p. 58

Molly Stevens' pot roast recipes call for a 5- to 6-quart Dutch oven. We tested her

method in a Lodge 5-quart enameled cast-iron Dutch oven, which sells for \$168 at Lodgemfg.com. We also recommend Staub and Le Creuset brand pots, both available at Chef's Resource (Chefsresource.com; 866-765-2433).

Singapore Noodles, p. 64

The ingredients for the Singapore Noodles recipe are all available in most supermarkets, but if you want to mail-order rice vermicelli, five-spice powder, chile paste, oyster sauce, or hoisin sauce, visit Ethnicgrocer.com.

Puréed Soups, p. 66

A hand blender makes fast work of puréeing soups. We like the Braun Multiquick (\$34.95), Braun Professional Multiquick (\$79.95), and KitchenAid's Immersion Blender (\$89.95), all available at Cooking.com (800-663-8810).

Cranberry Desserts, p. 70

For making the Cranberry Pear Tart, 9½-inch round fluted tart pans with removable bottoms are available in many kitchen stores, but you can also find them online for \$6.75 apiece at Bridgekitchenware.com (212-688-4220).

For the Jumbo Cranberry Jumbles, you can find Lindt

or Ghirardelli white chocolate in many supermarkets. But if you want to order other good-quality white chocolate, visit Chocosphere.com (877-992-4626) for a wide selection.

From Our Test Kitchen, p. 74

Quinoa is available in health-food stores and some specialty grocery stores. You can also mail-order various types of quinoa from Kalustians.com (800-352-3451), where 1-pound bags start at \$4.99.



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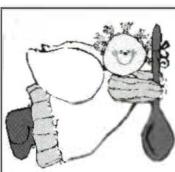
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nutrition information

Recipe	Page	Calories	Protein	Carb	Fats (g)				Chol.	Sodium	Fiber	Notes	
		total	from fat	(g)	(g)	total	sat	mono	poly	(mg)	(mg)	(g)	(analysis per serving)
Letters	10												
Mrs. Lenkh's Cheese Sablés		70	45	2	4	5	3	1.5	0	25	115	0	per 1 cracker
In Season	28												
Balsamic-Glazed Brussels Sprouts w Pancetta		230	170	5	10	19	8	8	1.5	35	520	3	based on 3 servings
Thanksgiving	42												
Dry-Brined Roasted Turkey		540	230	72	0	25	7	8	6	210	850	0	based on 10 servings
Silky Pan Gravy w Cream, Cognac & Thyme		110	45	10	2	5	2.5	1.5	0	35	15	0	per 1/4 cup
Herbed Bread Dressing w Bacon, Chestnuts & Prunes		320	90	13	46	9	3	4	1.5	60	660	4	based on 10 servings
Cranberry Sauce w Orange & Rosemary		100	0	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	per 1/4 cup
Fall Side Dishes	47												
Spicy Carrots w Jalapeño & Roasted Red Pepper		130	80	1	13	9	1.5	7	1	0	200	3	based on 8 servings
Peppery Egg Noodle, Farmer's Cheese & Cauliflower Gratin		330	160	14	28	18	10	5	1	80	390	4	based on 8 servings
Potato, Thyme & Olive Oil Gratin		220	80	3	32	9	1.5	7	1	0	150	3	based on 8 servings
Black Kale w Ham, Garlic & Onion		170	90	9	15	10	6	2.5	1	25	390	4	based on 8 servings
Pumpkin Tart	52												
Bourbon Pumpkin Tart w Walnut Streusel		650	320	9	73	35	19	9	5	165	340	3	based on 10 servings
Warm Salads	54												
Baby Romaine Salad w Spicy Chicken & Chipotle Vinaigrette		580	340	33	30	38	6	26	4.5	80	890	8	based on 4 servings
Wilted Arugula Salad w Crisp Potatoes, Feta & Olive Vinaigrette		300	220	5	18	24	6	16	2.5	15	540	2	based on 6 servings
Spinach Salad w Stir-Fried Pork & Ginger Vinaigrette		440	300	24	11	34	4.5	18	9	60	1090	3	based on 4 servings
Pot Roast	58												
Classic American Pot Roast		600	310	50	20	35	13	15	3	125	560	2	based on 8 servings
Red Wine Pot Roast		650	340	50	15	38	14	16	3.5	130	900	3	based on 8 servings
Beer-Braised Pot Roast		670	360	54	19	40	14	17	3.5	135	820	4	based on 8 servings
Mediterranean-Style Pot Roast		610	340	49	16	38	14	16	3.5	130	800	3	based on 8 servings
Singapore Noodles	64												
Singapore Noodles (Sing Jau Chow Mai)		290	80	19	32	9	1.5	3.5	3.5	95	540	2	based on 6 servings
Barbecued Pork (Char Siu)		50	10	7	2	1	0	0	0	20	135	0	per 1 oz serving
Puréed Soups	66												
Butternut Squash Soup w Apple & Bacon		130	35	7	19	4	1.5	1.5	0.5	10	370	4	based on 7 servings
Parsnip & Parmesan Soup		230	100	9	26	11	6	3	0.5	25	600	5	based on 6 servings
Wild Mushroom Soup w Sherry & Thyme		160	90	5	14	11	4	5	1	15	370	2	based on 6 servings
Cranberry Desserts	70												
Festive Cranberry-Pear Tart in a Walnut Shortbread Crust		300	110	3	44	12	7	3	2	45	150	3	based on 12 servings
Cranberry-Orange Muffins		270	90	5	39	11	6	3	0.5	60	250	1	per 1 muffin
Jumbo Cranberry Oatmeal Jumbles		250	120	3	30	13	7	3.5	1	35	150	1	per 1 cookie, yielding 18 cookies
From Our Test Kitchen	74												
Minty Quinoa Tabbouleh		130	70	3	13	8	1	6	1	0	110	2	per 1/2 cup
Quick & Delicious	90c												
Golden Chicken, Corn & Orzo Soup		250	90	22	19	10	2	6	2	40	440	2	based on 6 servings
Stir-Fried Beef w Snow Peas & Shiitakes		550	350	31	19	39	11	18	6	90	920	3	based on 4 servings
Smoky Refried Bean Tostadas		640	320	20	62	36	8	17	9	35	1400	14	based on 4 servings
Butternut Squash Risotto w Bacon & Sage		350	90	13	51	10	3	5	1.5	10	390	2	based on 6 servings
Shrimp & Asparagus w Cheddar Grits		510	220	44	29	25	14	7	2	355	920	1	based on 3 servings
Crisp Curried Chicken Fingers w Honey Mustard Dipping Sauce		370	180	32	13	20	3	5	4.5	85	540	1	based on 3 servings
Pan-Seared Pork Chops w Apple Ginger Chutney		600	200	22	85	22	10	9	1.5	90	350	3	based on 4 servings

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at Nutritional Solutions in Melville, New York. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used in the

calculations. Optional ingredients and those listed without a specific quantity are not included. When a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion is used. When the

quantity of salt and pepper aren't specified, the analysis is based on 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper per serving for entrées, and 1/8 teaspoon salt and 1/16 teaspoon pepper per serving for side dishes.

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Littleneck clams farmed by hand

Cape Cod's Wellfleet Bay is blessed with certain quirks of nature that make it an ideal place for shellfish: plenty of water circulation, fresh springs, and good algae growth. The bay is also home to Patrick and Barbara Woodbury's clam beds, which harbor some of the most succulent littlenecks around.

Pat and Barb met in graduate school while studying marine zoology and then left school to make a go at farming shellfish in Wellfleet. Word of their fine clams soon spread throughout the area.

What makes Woodbury clams so delicious has much to do with the gift of a great site—and a hands-on approach that “gives us a unique awareness and control of the quality of our shellfish,” says Pat. He and Barb take vigilant care of the beds, they harvest and sort by hand, and, unlike large-scale producers, they monitor the entire process themselves, from planting to personally delivering the clams to their customers.

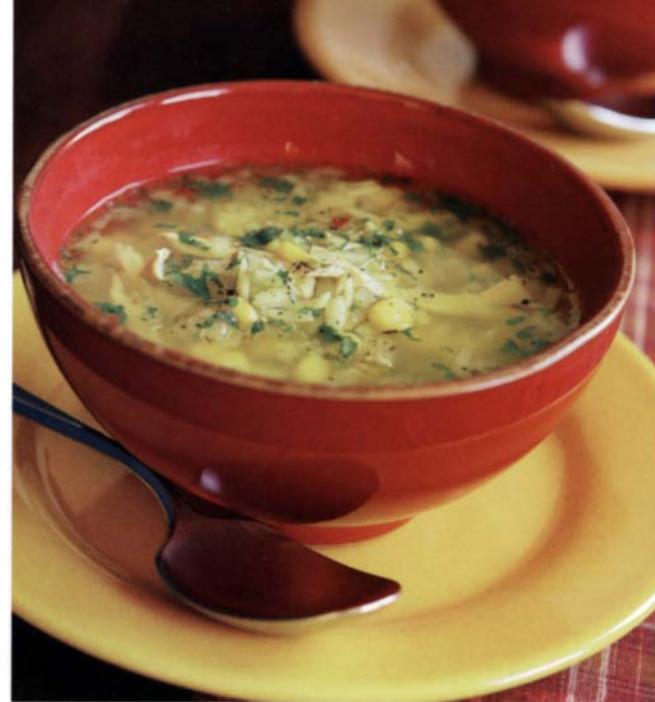
—Amy Albert,
senior editor

For more information, see p. 86.

1. Baby clams, called seedlings, spend the summer in nursery boxes in Wellfleet Bay. They take three or four months to grow to thumbnail size, when they're ready for planting. 2. To prepare for planting, Pat and Barb rake carefully so the beds are crab-free. 3. Sown seedlings are covered with protective netting, which remains in place for at least a year. “It's all about excluding predators,” says Barb. “Small clams are delectable to fish, crabs, and birds.” 4. The netting is removed after about a year, and then the littlenecks spend another year or so in the sand before they're mature. 5. “The smell and flavor of a fresh littleneck is like being immersed in the sea,” says Pat.

BY JENNIFER ARMENTROUT

After a long, tiring day of work, I often crave the warm, soothing flavors of comfort food. But because my job involves cooking all day long in the *Fine Cooking* test kitchen, I honestly don't want to spend much time in the kitchen when I get home at night. I'm willing to bet that a lot of you feel the same way, too, even if your day job doesn't involve cooking. The good news is that comfort food doesn't have to be slow-cooking. Sure, you may have to wait until Sunday for that beef stew you've been dreaming of, but doesn't a roast chicken soup flavored with lemon and saffron sound good? How about a rich butternut squash and bacon risotto topped with crisp fried sage leaves? These may not sound quick, but trust me, they are. Just be sure to read the recipe through and have all your ingredients ready to go before you start cooking, and you'll be sitting down to a relaxing, homemade dinner in about 45 minutes or less.



Golden Chicken, Corn & Orzo Soup

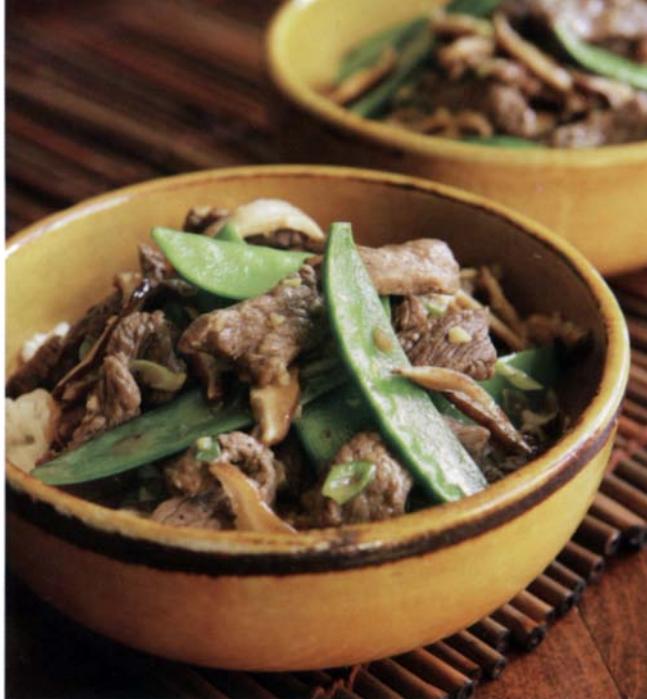
Serves five to six as a main course.

2 Tbs. olive oil
2 large ribs celery, finely diced
1 medium onion, finely diced
1 pinch saffron threads
½ tsp. dried thyme
2 qt. homemade or low-salt chicken broth
2 cups finely diced or shredded cooked chicken (such as leftover roast chicken)
½ cup orzo
1 cup frozen corn
¼ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
3 Tbs. fresh lemon juice; more to taste
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Bring a medium saucepan of well-salted water to a boil over high heat. Meanwhile,

heat the oil in a large soup pot over medium heat. Add the celery, onion, saffron, and thyme. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables start to soften, 5 to 6 minutes. Add the broth and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to a simmer, add the chicken and cook until the vegetables are tender, about 15 minutes. While the soup simmers, cook the orzo in the boiling salted water until tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Drain.

Add the drained orzo, corn, and parsley to the soup and cook just until the corn is heated through, about 2 minutes. Stir in the lemon juice and season to taste with salt, pepper, and more lemon juice, if needed.



Stir-Fried Beef with Snow Peas & Shiitakes

Serves four.

2 tsp. cornstarch
6 Tbs. homemade or low-salt chicken broth
1/4 cup ponzo sauce (see p. 78)
1 Tbs. toasted sesame oil
1 1/4 lb. boneless beef rib-eye steaks, trimmed and thinly sliced across the grain (1/8 to 1/4 inch thick)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 Tbs. neutral oil, like canola or vegetable
7 to 8 oz. fresh shiitake mushrooms, stems trimmed off, caps thinly sliced
1/2 lb. snow peas, trimmed
3 small or 2 medium scallions (white and green parts), thinly sliced
1 1 1/2-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and minced (about 3 Tbs.)
2 medium cloves garlic, minced

In a small bowl, stir the cornstarch into 1 Tbs. of the chicken broth until smooth. Stir in the remaining 5 Tbs. broth, along with the ponzo and sesame oil.

Season the sliced beef with 1/2 tsp. salt and several grinds of pepper. Heat 2 Tbs. of the oil in a large skillet or stir-fry pan over medium-high heat. When the oil is very hot (it should shimmer), add the beef and stir-fry just until it loses its raw color, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer the beef to a clean bowl. Return the pan to medium-high heat, add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil, and then add the mushrooms and peas. Stir-fry until the mushrooms are tender and the peas are crisp-tender, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the scallions, ginger, and garlic, and stir-fry for 30 seconds. Return the beef to the pan. Give the broth mixture a quick stir to recombine and then pour it into the pan. Cook, stirring, until the sauce thickens, about 1 minute. Serve immediately.

Serving suggestion:
Serve with plenty of steamed white rice.



Smoky Refried Bean Tostadas

Serves four.

7 Tbs. canola or vegetable oil; more if needed
8 5- to 6-inch corn tortillas
Kosher salt
1 medium onion, finely diced
1 tsp. ground cumin
2 15-oz. cans pinto beans, rinsed and drained
2 Tbs. chipotle (smoked) Tabasco sauce
1 cup crumbled feta (about 6 ounces)
3/4 cup finely diced fresh tomato
1/2 cup thinly sliced red radishes
1/2 cup loosely packed cilantro leaves

Heat the oven to 200°F (or heat a warming drawer if you have one). Line a baking sheet with paper towels. Heat 5 Tbs. of the oil in a small (8-inch) nonstick omelet pan over medium-high heat until the oil bubbles right away when the edge of a tortilla is dipped into it. Using tongs and working with one tortilla at a time, fry the tortillas until golden brown on both sides, about 30 seconds per side. As each one finishes frying, briefly dangle the tortilla above the pan to allow some of the excess oil to drip back into the pan, and

then transfer the tortilla to the paper-towel-lined baking sheet. Sprinkle each tortilla with a little salt while it's still hot. As you fry, adjust the heat to keep the oil from getting too hot or cool, and if the pan goes dry, add more oil, 1 Tbs. at a time. When all the tortillas are fried, keep them warm in the oven.

Heat the remaining 2 Tbs. oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring often, until softened and lightly browned around the edges, about 3 minutes. Stir in the cumin and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the beans, 1 tsp. salt, and 1 cup water. Working quickly, mash the beans with the back of a fork until most but not all of them are broken apart, and simmer until the beans look creamy and spreadable and much of the water has been absorbed, about 3 minutes. Stir in the chipotle Tabasco sauce and season to taste with more salt if needed.

To serve, spread each tortilla with about 1/3 cup of the beans, and top with the feta, tomato, radishes, and cilantro leaves.



Butternut Squash Risotto with Bacon & Sage

Serves four as a main course, or six as a starter.

1 qt. homemade or low-salt chicken broth; more as needed

½ cup dry white wine

2 Tbs. olive oil

10 large fresh sage leaves

4 slices bacon, cut crosswise into thirds

2 medium shallots, minced (about ¼ cup)

2 cups ¼-inch-diced butternut squash

1½ cups arborio or other risotto rice, such as carnaroli or vialone nano

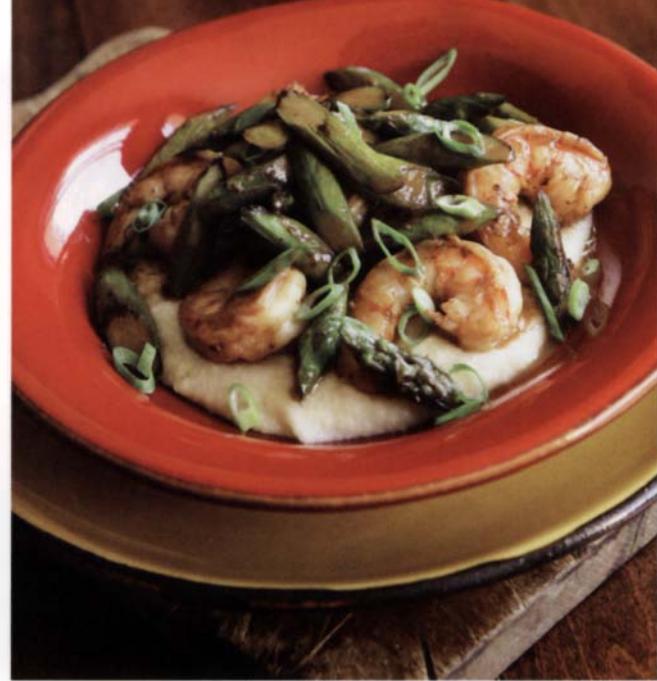
½ cup freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Combine the chicken broth and wine in a small saucepan and set over medium heat. In a medium (3-qt.) saucepan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the sage leaves and fry, turning once, until they've turned dark green in most places, about 1 minute total. Don't brown. With a fork, transfer to a plate lined with paper towels to drain. Put the bacon in the saucepan and cook, stirring occasionally, until nicely browned, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer the bacon to the plate with the sage.

Add the shallots to the saucepan and cook, stirring with a wooden spoon, until softened, about 1 minute. Add the squash and rice and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Ladle in enough of the hot broth mixture to just cover the rice. Cook, stirring frequently, until the broth is mostly absorbed. Add another ladleful of broth and continue cooking, stirring, and adding more ladlefuls of broth as the previous additions are absorbed, until the rice is tender with just a slightly toothsome quality, about 25 minutes. As the risotto cooks, adjust the heat so that it bubbles gently. The broth mixture needn't be boiling; it should just be hot. If you use all the broth and wine before the rice gets tender, use more broth but not more wine.

Set aside the nicest looking sage leaves as a garnish (1 leaf per serving). Crumble half of the bacon and the remaining sage leaves into the risotto. Stir in the Parmigiano. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Crumble the remaining bacon over each serving and garnish with a sage leaf.



Shrimp & Asparagus with Cheddar Grits

Serves two to three.

4 Tbs. unsalted butter

1 clove garlic, minced

2½ cups homemade or low-salt chicken broth

½ cup old-fashioned (not quick-cooking) grits

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

½ cup grated extra-sharp Cheddar

½ tsp. Tabasco or other hot sauce; more to taste

½ lb. medium-thick asparagus, trimmed and sliced on the diagonal into 1-inch pieces

1 lb. large shrimp, peeled and deveined

2 Tbs. Worcestershire sauce

1 to 2 scallions (green parts only), thinly sliced

Heat ½ Tbs. of the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, 30 to 60 seconds. Add the broth and bring to a boil over high heat. While stirring constantly, pour in the grits and ¼ tsp. salt. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and

cook, stirring occasionally, until the grits are thickened, 15 to 20 minutes. Stir in the Cheddar and ¼ tsp. of the hot sauce. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and more hot sauce. Cover and set aside in a warm spot.

Heat 1 Tbs. of the butter in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the asparagus, sprinkle with a little salt, and cook, stirring frequently, until crisp-tender and a little browned, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the shrimp and cook until the shrimp is opaque and the asparagus is tender, 2 to 3 minutes.

Reduce the heat to low and add the Worcestershire sauce and the remaining ¼ tsp. hot sauce. Melt the remaining 2½ Tbs. butter into the shrimp and asparagus. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and more hot sauce. Serve the shrimp and asparagus over the grits, sprinkled with the scallions.



Crisp Curried Chicken Fingers with Honey Mustard Dipping Sauce

Serves two to three as a main course.

1/2 small shallot, minced
1 Tbs. rice vinegar
1 cup panko (see note)
6 Tbs. vegetable oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 lb. chicken breast tenders
2 Tbs. mayonnaise
3/4 tsp. mild curry powder
1/4 tsp. Tabasco sauce
2 Tbs. Dijon mustard
2 Tbs. honey

Position a rack 6 inches from the broiler element and heat the broiler on high for at least 10 minutes. Combine the shallot and vinegar in a small bowl and set aside for at least 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, pour the panko into a shallow dish (like a pie pan) and toss with 2 Tbs. of the oil, 1/4 tsp. salt, and a few grinds of pepper. Have ready a heavy-duty baking sheet. Trim off any exposed tendon ends from the wide tips of the tenders, if necessary. In a medium bowl, combine the tenders with the mayonnaise, curry powder, Tabasco, 1/2 tsp. salt,

and several grinds of pepper. Toss with your hands to coat well. Dredge each tender in the panko and arrange in a single layer on the baking sheet. Broil, flipping once, until the tenders are crisp and golden brown on the outside, cooked through on the inside, 3 to 5 minutes per side.

While the chicken cooks, whisk the mustard and honey into the shallot and vinegar. Slowly whisk in the remaining 1/4 cup of oil. Season the sauce to taste with salt and pepper. Serve the chicken fingers with small dishes of the sauce for dipping.

Note: Look for panko (Japanese breadcrumbs) in the Asian section of your grocery store, or at an Asian market. In a pinch, you can substitute homemade coarse dry breadcrumbs, but they won't stick to the chicken quite as well, and the texture will be more sandy than crisp.



Pan-Seared Pork Chops with Apple-Ginger Chutney

Serves four.

3 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, and cut into 1/2-inch dice
1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced
1/3 cup raisins
3 Tbs. minced fresh ginger
1 cup packed light brown sugar
1 cup cider vinegar
4 Tbs. unsalted butter
1/8 tsp. cayenne
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 boneless center-cut pork loin chops, about 1 inch thick
1 Tbs. olive oil
3 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro

In a large saucepan, combine the apples, onion, raisins, ginger, brown sugar, vinegar, 3 Tbs. of the butter, the cayenne, and 1/2 tsp. salt. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to maintain a lively simmer and cook until the solids are very tender and the liquid has reduced to a juicy, syrupy glaze, 20 to 25 minutes.

Meanwhile, once the chutney has been simmering for about 15 minutes, season the pork chops with salt and pepper. In a 12-inch skillet, heat the remaining 1 Tbs. butter with the oil over medium-high heat until the butter foams and just begins to turn a nutty brown. Add the pork chops and cook until the first side is deeply browned, 3 to 5 minutes. Flip the chops and continue cooking until the second side is well browned and the chops are cooked through, 3 to 5 minutes.

Stir the cilantro into the chutney and season to taste with salt. Serve the chops topped with the chutney.

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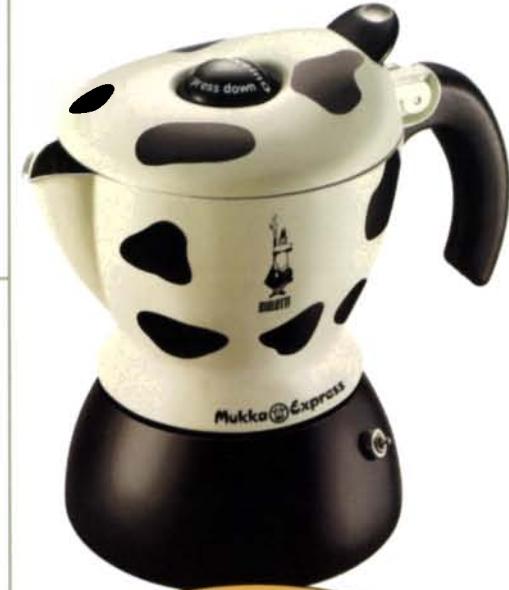
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